Enjoining Right

&

Forbidding Wrong

by Ibn Taymiyya

translated by

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Introduction

All praise is due to Allah. We praise Him, seek His aid, and seek His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil which is within ourselves, and from the evil in our actions. Whoever Allah guides, none can send astray; whoever Allah sends astray, none can guide.

I bear witness that there is no deity other than Allah alone, and with no partner. And I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and His messenger. Allah sent him with the guidance and the way of truth, that He might raise it above all other ways of life. Allah is sufficient as a witness. May Allah send His prayers and his greetings upon Muhammad and upon the people of Muhammad.

Enjoining right and forbidding wrong is that with which Allah sent the revealed books, and with it He sent His messengers, and it is an integral part of the way (i.e. the *deen*). The message of Allah is composed of informative and directive parts. As for the informative, it is Allah informing us about Himself, such as *tauhid* (theology), or His informing us about His creation, such as the stories of previous peoples and Prophets in which are contained for us lessons, threats and promises. The directive part consists of commands to do, commands not to do, and things left to our choice and discretion.

Thus, it has been mentioned in the hadith that the chapter of the Qur'an which starts out: [Say: He is Allah, the One...] is equal to one third of the Qur'an, because of its including the third of *tauhid*. The Qur'an consists of *tauhid*, commands, and historical events.

Enjoining Right: Our Prophet And Those Before Him

Allah said by way of description of Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam):

> [He orders them with that which is good and forbids them that which is bad. And he makes allowed for them that which is clean and good, and forbids them that which is unclean and detestable.] Qur'an 7/157.

This illustrates the perfection of the message of the Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam). He is the one on whose tongue Allah has enjoined **all** that is good, forbidden **all** that is bad, allowed **every** clean thing and prohibited **every** unclean or harmful thing. For this reason, it is narrated that the Prophet said:

> "I have been sent to complete the qualities of good character."

And he said in the agreed-upon hadith:

> "My analogy in relation to the other prophets of Allah is like the analogy of a man who built a house. He completed and perfected everything about the house all except for the location of a single brick. The people used to pass by the house and express pleasure at its beauty, but they would say: "If only it weren't for that missing brick." I am that brick, and I am the seal of the Prophets."

Through Muhammad, Allah completed the way (*deen*) which includes the enjoining of all good, the forbidding of all evil, the allowing of everything clean, and the prohibition of everything unclean. As for the Prophets who came before him, their messages sometimes contained the prohibition of some clean and good things, as Allah said:

> [Because of some crimes committed by the Jews, we forbad to them some clean things which had been allowed to them.] Qur'an 4/160

Also, their messages sometimes did not forbid all unclean things as Allah said:

> [All food was once allowed to the children of Israel except that which they chose to forbid themselves before the sending down of the taurat.] Qur'an 3/93.

The forbidding of unclean things is included in the meaning of forbidding wrong, just as the allowing of all clean things is included in the meaning of enjoining right. This is because the prohibiting of clean and good things is part of what Allah has forbidden. Thus, the enjoining of all good and the forbidding of all bad did not reach completion except in the Prophethood of Muhammad (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) by means of whom Allah completed the qualities of good character, which includes all that is good. Allah said:

> [On this day I have perfected for you your way (*deen*), and have completed my favor upon you, and have accepted for you Islam as your way (*deen*)].

Allah has perfected for us the way, and completed His favor upon us, and accepted for us Islam (submission) as our way of life.

This Nation Is The Best Nation For The People

Allah ascribed to the nation (*Ummah*) of Muhammad the same characteristic which He ascribed to the Prophet himself in the previous verse when He said:

> [You are the best nation brought forth for the people of the world: you enjoin right and you forbid wrong, and you believe in Allah.] Qur'an 3/110.

And He said:

> [Believing men and believing women are the protecting friends of each other: they enjoin right and they forbid wrong.] Qur`an 9/71.

In the same vein, Abu Huraira, a companion of the Prophet and narrator of many hadith used to say:

> "You are the best people for the people, you tie them in chains and shackles and drag them off to paradise."

Allah explains in the above verse that this nation is the best nation for the people i.e. the most beneficial to them, the one doing them the greatest favor. This is because they constitute the total good and benefit for the people via their enjoining right and forbidding wrong both in quality and in quantity, since they enjoin all that is right and forbid all that is wrong, and their message is addressed to all people of the world. Furthermore, they uphold this institution with *jihad* (struggle) in the path of Allah with their lives and their property, and this constitutes the complete benefit for the world.

As for the previous nations, none of them enjoined all people with all that is right, nor did they prohibit all that is wrong to all people. Furthermore, they did not make jihad (struggle) in this cause. Some of them did not take up armed struggle at all, and those who did, such as the Jews, their struggle was generally for the purpose of driving their enemy from their land, or as any oppressed people struggles against their oppressor, and not for sake of calling the people of the world to guidance and right, nor to enjoin on them

right and to prohibit to them wrong. Allah narrates the following discussion between Musa (Moses) and his followers:

> [O people, enter the sacred land which Allah has written for you, and do not turn back on your heels to subsequently find yourselves in abject loss. They said: "O Musa, therein is a belligerent people, and we will not enter it until they come out - if they come out, then we will enter it." ... They said: "O Musa, we will never enter it as long as they are in it, so you go, you and your Lord, and fight. We are going to sit right here.] Qur'an 5/21-24

Allah says in another verse:

> [Did you not see the assembly of the sons of Israel after the time of Musa when they said to a Prophet of theirs: "Raise up for us a king, that we may fight in the path of Allah." He said: "Would you perhaps not fight then, if fighting were prescribed for you?" They said: "Why would we not fight in the path of Allah, and we have been exiled from our homes and our children?" Then, when fighting was prescribed for them, they turned their backs, all except a few, and Allah is in full knowledge of the wrong-doers.] Qur'an 2/246

Here we see that those speaking with this prophet cited the reason for their fighting that they had been exiled from their homes and their children. In spite of this, most of them failed to live up to their word, when in fact they were ordered to fight. For this reason, they were not allowed to keep any spoils of war, and were not allowed to take female captives as right-hand possessions.

It is well known that the greatest nation of believers before us was the children of Israel. This has been narrated in the agreed-upon hadith narrated by Ibn Abbas, that the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said:

> "The previous nations and their prophets were shown to me last night. A prophet would pass with one man, another with two men, another with a small group, and another with no one with him. Then, I saw a great crowd, small mountains filled with people, and I said: "This is my Ummah!" It was said to me: "These are the sons of Israel, but look over there." Then I saw a huge crowd which blocked the horizons. It was said to me: "This is your Ummah, and among them are seventy thousand who will enter paradise with

> no account-taking." The Prophet's listeners dispersed with no further explanation being given. Then, the companions discussed this issue, saying: "As for us, we were born in associationism, but have believed in Allah and His Prophet ... but these are our sons. When this speculation of theirs about who the seventy thousand were reached the Prophet, he said: "They are those who do not practice cauterization, or use incantations (i.e. believing in some mystical ability to cure or prevent illness), do not believe in omens, and who depend fully on their Lord." Ukasha ibn Mihsan stood up and said: "Am I one of them, O Messenger of Allah?" The Prophet said: "Yes". When someone else stood up and said the same thing, the prophet said "Ukasha has come before you."

From this we understand why the consensus of this ummah is a proof, i.e. because Allah has informed us that they enjoin all that is right, and prohibit all that is wrong. If they (i.e. the Muslim Ummah) were to all agree to allow something forbidden, to drop an obligation, to forbid something allowed, or to perpetrate any falsehood about Allah or about His creation, they would be enjoiners of what is wrong, prohibitors of what is good, and that is surely not of pure speech and good works. What's more, the verse implies that whatever the ummah has not enjoined is not right, and whatever it has not prohibited is not wrong. Since this is the Ummah which enjoins all right, and prohibits all wrong, it is not possible for the entire Ummah to enjoin something which is wrong nor to prohibit something which is good.

Just as Allah has informed us that this ummah will fulfill this function, He has also made it a collective obligation (*fardh kifaya*) upon the Muslim Ummah saying:

> [Let there be from among you a group which calls to what is good, enjoins right, and forbids wrong. These are the successful ones.]

It is not the duty of the practitioner of enjoining right and prohibiting wrong to deliver the message to everyone in the world. Such was not even required of the Prophets (Peace be upon them), and this is an auxillary to the prophetic messages. Rather, what is required is to make it available to those who seek it. If they, in turn are negligent in seeking it, though it has been made accessible, then the responsibility is upon them, not him. Since enjoining right is a collective obligation, as the Qur'an clearly indicates, it is not an obligation upon every single individual Muslim, rather upon them as a group.

Since *jihad* is part of the perfection if enjoining right and prohibiting wrong, it, too, is a collective obligation. As with any collective obligation, this means that if those sufficient for the task do not come forward, everyone capable of it to any extent is in sin to the extent of his capability in that area. This is because its obligation when it is needed is upon every Muslim to the extent of his/her ability, as the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said in the hadith found in Muslim:

> "Whoever of you sees wrong being committed, let him change it with his hand (i.e. by force). If he is unable to do that, then with his tongue, and if he is unable to do that, then with his heart."

This being the case, it is clear that enjoining right and prohibiting wrong is one of the greatest good works that we have been ordered to do.

What Is Ma'ruf (Right) And Munkar (Wrong)?

Carrying out the punishments prescribed by Allah on whoever transgresses the bounds of the *shari'a* is a part of prohibiting wrong. It is obligatory upon those in authority (*Uluu-ul-amr*) i.e. the scholars from each group or nation, and their amirs, and their elders, to stand over the general population enjoining good and prohibiting wrong, thus ordering them with all that which Allah and His Prophet have enjoined. For example, the rulings of Islamic Law (*Shari'a*) e.g. the five prayers in their proper time periods, obligatory alms, obligatory fasting, and pilgrimage to Makka. Also, belief in Allah, His angels, His revealed books, His prophets, and the Judgement Day, belief in the pre-destination of all things the good and the bad, and the concept of *ihsaan* (the highest level of iman or faith) which means to worship Allah as if you see Him for, verily, even if you do not see Him, He always sees you. Moreover, the good (*ma'ruf*) includes everything both internal and external which has been enjoined by Allah and His Prophet. These include: absolute sincerity to Allah (*ikhlaas*), dependance on Allah (*tawakkal*), that Allah and His Prophet be more beloved to the believer than anyone else, hope for Allah's mercy and fear of His punishment, patience with the decree of Allah and complete surrender to His order, truthfulness of speech, fulfilling of obligations, returning trusts to their owners, good behavior toward parents, maintaining of family ties, cooperation in all acts of righteousness and good, benevolence and generosity toward one's neighbors, orphans, poor people, stranded travellers, companions, spouses, and servants, justice and fairness in speech and actions, calling people to good character, and acts of forbearance such as establishing relations with those

who cut you off, giving those who deny you, and forgiving those who oppress you. Enjoining people to be close together and cooperative, and forbidding them differing and dividing themselves is also a part of enjoining what is right.

As for the bad (*munkar*) which Allah and His prophet have forbidden, its ultimate and worst form is the association of partners with Allah. Associationism means to pray to someone or something else along with Allah. This partner could be the sun, the moon, stars or planets, an angel, one of the prophets, a righteous man or saint, one of the jinn, images or graves of any of these, or anything else which is called to other than Allah the Exalted. Associationism is also to seek aid or succor from any of the above, or to prostrate to them. All of this and anything like it is the associationism (*shirk*) forbidden by Allah on the tongues of all of His prophets.

Everything which Allah has forbidden is also part of the munkar such as unjustified killing, taking people's property by unlawful means, taking of property by force or intimidation, interest, or gambling, all types of sales or contracts which the Prophet has prohibited, breaking of family ties, cruelty to parents, cheating in weights and measures, and any form of transgression on the rights of others. Also in this category are all innovated acts of "worship" which Allah and His prophet have not ordained or sanctioned.

Let Your Enjoining Of Good Be Itself Good

Friendliness and sympathy are the correct way in enjoining right and forbidding wrong. For this reason, it has been said:

> "Let your enjoining of good be good, and let not your forbidding of bad be bad."

Benefits Must Outweigh Negative Consequences

Enjoining right and forbidding wrong being one of the greatest obligations or commendable acts in Islam, it is essential that the benefit therein outweigh its negative consequences. This is the general spirit of the messages of the prophets and the revealed books, and Allah does not like chaos and corruption. All that which Allah has enjoined is beneficial, and the epitome of benefit. Allah has praised "*salah*" (the opposite of corruption) and the

"*musliheen*" (reformers, or those who bring about *salah*). And He has praised those who believe and do good works (*saalihaat)*, while condemning corruption (*fasaad*) and those who cause it in many places in the Qur'an. Thus whenever the adverse effects (*mafsada*) of any act of enjoining or forbidding are greater than its benefit (*maslaha*), it is no longer part of what Allah has enjoined upon us, even if it be a case of neglecting obligations or committing the forbidden. This is because it is upon the believer to fear Allah in relation to His slaves, and their guidance is not his responsibility. This is part of the meaning of the verse in which Allah says:

> [O, you who believe, your selves are your responsibility, those who go astray will not harm you when you stick to guidance.]

"Sticking to guidance" is only accomplished by fulfilling and carrying out all obligations. Thus, when a Muslim does what is obligatory upon him by way of enjoining right and forbidding wrong, just as he fulfilled all other obligations, the going astray of those who go astray will not do him any harm.

Methodology Of Enjoining Right And Forbidding Wrong

Enjoining right and forbidding wrong is done sometimes with the heart, sometimes with the tongue, and sometimes with the hand (i.e. physical force). As for practicing it with the heart, it is obligatory upon everyone in every time and situation, since its practice brings no hardship. Whoever fails to do even that is not even a believer as in the full version of the previously cited hadith:

> "Whoever of you sees wrong being committed, let him rectify it with his hand, if he is unable, then with his tongue, and if he us unable, then with his heart, and this is the weakest of faith -- or in another version: beyond this there is not a single mustard seed's weight of faith (*iman*)."

Ibn Masood was once asked: "Who are the living dead?" to which he replied:"He who does not acknowledge the right as such, and does not reject the wrong."

He is referring to the person described in the following agreed-upon hadith who consistently failed to reject wrong when tested. The Prophet said:

> "Tests are shown to the hearts like a straw mat, straw by straw. Whichever heart accepts them, and absorbs them, gets a black spot placed on it, and whichever heart rejects them, gets a white, clear spot on it. This goes on until the hearts are of two types: a heart which is white, smooth, and clear like a polished stone which will not be harmed by further trials or tests for as long as the heavens and the earth last, and another dark and blemished; it is like a hook turned over the wrong way on which nothing can be hung - it neither acknowledges what is right nor rejects what is wrong, except for that which happens to coincide with its lusts and inclinations with which this heart has become fully absorbed."

Pitfalls Of Enjoining Right And Forbidding Wrong

Two groups of people fall into error in this area:

One group leaves what is obligatory upon them in the area of enjoining right and forbidding wrong, clinging to an incorrect interpretation of the aya quoted previously:

> [O, you who believe, your selves are your responsibility, those who go astray will not harm you when you stick to guidance.]

Abu Bakr once explained this error in a khutba saying:

> "O people, verily you read this aya, and you apply it where it does not belong, for I heard the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) say: Verily when the people see the wrong-doer, and do not seize his hand, Allah is about to inflict them with a general punishment."

The second group desires to enjoin and forbid the people with their tongues and their hands absolutely and in all situations without sufficient knowledge of the shari'a, nor forbearance, nor patience, nor regard for that which is beneficial and that which has more harm than benefit and that which is possible and that which is not possible. This is as in the hadith narrated by Abu Tha'laba Al-Khushaniy:

> "... rather enjoin on one another what is right and forbid what is wrong until you see obedience to greed and following of lusts and preoccupation with this world and the absolute fascination of each one with his own opinion, and

> when you see a situation over which you have no power, what is upon you then is your private affairs. For verily, the Days of Patience are coming; patience in those days is like squeezing a hot coal in your hand. The reward of one who fulfills all of his obligations in those days is equal to the reward of fifty such people today."

This group, then, enjoins and forbids believing that they are in obedience to Allah ta'ala when in reality they are transgressors of His boundaries. In this way, many of the deviant and misguided groups considered themselves to be enjoiners of right and forbidders of wrong such as the khawaarij, and the mu'tazilah, and the raafidha (Shi'a), and others of those who erred in understanding that which Allah gave them in terms of enjoining right and forbidding wrong, and fighting jihad, and other issues. The corruption caused by this kind of enjoining and forbidding is much greater than any good which may result.

Rebellion Against The Imam Of The Muslims

For this reason, the Prophet ordered us to be patient when there is injustice on the part of the ruler of the Muslims, and forbad us to fight them, as long as they maintain the prayer, and he said:

> "Give them what is due to them, and ask Allah what is due to you." (Muslim and others)

Thus, one of the basic principles of *Ahl As-Sunnah Wa Al-Jamaa*: loyalty to the larger group of the Muslim Ummah, not rebelling against its rulers, and keeping away from battles when chaos and *fitna* arises.

As for the deviant groups such as the mu'tazilah, they view fighting the Imams of the Muslims as one of the principles of their religion. The Mu'tazilah make the basis of their religion five principles: "*Tauhid*" - which in their terminology means the negation of all of Allah's names and characteristics, Divine Justice - which means the denying of the decree of Allah in all things, the station between the two stations - i.e. their erroneous theory that anyone who sins is no longer a believer and not quite a *kafir*, he is stuck somewhere in between, the carrying out of threats - taking literally the threats of punishment which Allah attaches to various sins in the Qur'an, and enjoining right and forbidding wrong - part of their theory here is warfare against the imams of the Muslims.

The General Principle Of Enjoining And Forbidding

All of what we are saying comes under the general principle which says that when benefit and harm are mixed up together, and one must choose between doing good with some bad side effects, or leaving that good to avoid its bad side effects, it is obligatory to choose the course having the greater overall or net benefit. This is because enjoining and forbidding though they entail the attainment of some benefit, and the prevention of some harm, its opposite must also be considered. If, in carrying out this enjoining or forbidding, there is benefit lost greater than the benefit gained, or harm is brought about greater than the harm which was avoided, then this is not part of that which Allah has ordered us to do, rather it is *haram*, because of the fact that its net harm is greater than its net benefit.

It Is Obligatory To Measure All Things By The Criterion Of The Shari'a

The only criterion for measuring the above-mentioned harm and benefit is with the scales of the *Shari'a*. Whenever one is capable of following a text directly, it is not permitted for him to turn elsewhere. If he cannot find a text for the exact problem confronting him, he can exert his reason to understand the ruling by way of analogy. The legal texts are seldom without someone capable of knowing their implications, and how they point the way to the rulings of the shari'a.

Thus, if an individual or group constantly joins something right with something else wrong, and will not do one without the other, and will either do both of them together, or neither of them, it is not then allowed to enjoin on them the right nor to forbid them the wrong. First, the issue must be analyzed: If the good involved is greater, then they must be enjoined to do it, even if that necessitates the evil which is of lesser degree, and they are not to be forbidden the evil involved which would mean the loss of the good which is greater than it. In fact such a forbiddance in such a situation would be part of blocking the path of Allah (*saddun 'an sabeeli 'llah*) and would be striving for the eradication of obedience to Allah and to His Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) and toward the elimination of the doing of good.

On the other hand, if the evil involved is greater, it must be forbidden, even though that means the loss of some good which is of lesser degree. In such a case, the enjoining of this good which brings with it an evil of greater degree is in fact enjoining evil, and striving in the path of disobedience to Allah and His Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam).

If the good and the evil which cannot be separated are of equal degree, both of them should neither be enjoined nor forbidden. Thus, in the case of some good and some evil which cannot be separated, sometimes what is demanded is enjoining the good, and sometimes forbidding the wrong, and sometimes neither this nor that. This is not a general rule, and applies only to specific situations of the type mentioned.

As for the general case, right must be enjoined absolutely, and evil forbidden absolutely. For the specific individual or group, its good must be enjoined, and its evil forbidden, its praiseworthy aspects praised, and its blameworthy aspects criticized in such a way that the enjoining of right does not include the loss of a good greater than itself nor the bringing about of an evil of greater degree, and the forbidding of evil does not involve the bringing about of a greater evil or the loss of a good of greater degree.

When the issue is unclear, the believer must strive to understand it until the truth becomes clear to him. He cannot undertake acts of obedience except with knowledge and correct intention. If he fails to do it, he is in disobedience to Allah. Neglecting what is obligatory is disobedience just as doing what has been forbidden in the area of enjoining right is also disobedience. This is a very wide and dangerous area, and there is no power and no strength except with the aid of Allah!

An example of this issue from the Sunnah is the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) leaving Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salool and others like him among the leaders of hypocrisy and corruption because of their many helpers and people loyal to them. The removing of their evil through punishment would have brought on the removal of other good of greater degree because of the anger of his tribe and the arousal of their tribalistic hostility against the Prophet and the Muslims.

Also, this would have resulted in the repulsion of the people when they heard that the Prophet of Allah kills his companions. Thus when he spread among the people that which he spread in the slander against A'isha (May Allah be pleased with her) and then denied it, and when Sa'ad ibn Mu'adh spoke to him harshly as he deserved, and pointed out his hypocrisy, and then Sa'ad ibn Ubadah - though he was a believer and companion and righteous man - invoked his protection that Abdullah ibn Ubayy be left alone, the tribe of each of these two men gave their loyalty to the position of their tribesman until chaos and bloodshed nearly resulted.

The Love Of Good Should Be In Harmony With What Allah Loves

This principle is that the love of a believer for what is good, and his hatred for what is evil, and his desire for the accomplishment of the good and his desire for the avoidance and prevention of evil should be in harmony with what Allah loves and hates. Allah loves all that He has enjoined upon us in His *shari'a*, and dislikes all that He has forbidden us in His *shari'a*. Furthermore, the **action** of the believer in that which he loves (the good), and his avoidance and opposition to that which he hates (the evil), must be to the extent of his ability and his strength, for verily, Allah does not demand from any of us more than what is within our ability.

Allah says:

> [Fear Allah (have *taqwa* of Allah) as much as you are able] Qur'an 64/16.

The Love And Hate Of The Heart

What is upon the believer in terms of his actions must not be confused with his obligations in terms of the actions of the heart. It is obligatory upon the believer for his hatred of evil and his love of good, and his desire to do good and his desire to oppose and avoid evil to be perfect, complete, and without doubt or hesitation. Any lack in this area is none other than a lack in faith (*imaan*). This is in contrast with the actions of his body which is only within the bounds of his ability.

When the will of the heart, its likes and dislikes are complete and perfect (i.e. in harmony with the love and hate of Allah ta'ala) and then the believer does of that all that is within his ability, he will be given the reward of one who carried out the orders of Allah perfectly. Some of the people have loves and hates which are not in harmony with the love of Allah and His Prophet and the hates of Allah and His Prophet, and this is a type of *hawaa* (the inclinations, lusts, or tendencies of the self). If he follows them, then he is a follower of *hawaa.*

Allah said:

> [And who is more astray than the one who follows his *hawaa* without any guidance from Allah?] Qur'an 28/50

The origin of *hawaa* is that which the self loves, and that which the self hates is a corollary of it.

What Exactly Is Hawaa

The meaning of *hawaa* is the loving and the loathing which is in the self. It is not in and of itself blameworthy, since it is not under the control of the person, rather what is blameworthy is the following if these likes, desires and dislikes.

Allah said to Dawood:

> [O Dawood, we have made you a successor on the Earth, so rule between the people with the truth, and do not follow *hawaa* lest it lead you astray from the path of Allah.] Qur'an 38/26

And Allah said in another aya:

> [And who is more astray than the one who follows his *hawaa* without guidance from Allah?] Qur'an 28/50

The Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) tells us in the hadith:

> "Three things which save: fear of Allah in public and private, moderation in poverty and in wealth, and speaking the truth when angry and when contented. And three things which lead to destruction: obedience to greed, following of *hawaa*, and a person's being pleased with himself."

The love and the hate of which we are speaking brings about certain "tastes" and feelings and desires in the presence of the loved or hated thing. Whoever follows these desires and feelings without an order from Allah and His Prophet, is the one described as the follower of his *hawaa*. In fact, this may even reach the level of shirk wherein he takes as his god his own *hawaa!* (See Qur`an 43/25)

The Following Of Hawaa In The Previous Religions

The following of *hawaa* in matters pertaining to religion and worship is more grievous and serious than the following of *hawaa* in matters of ordinary worldly desires. The first of these is the condition of those who became *kuffar* from the Christians and the Jews and the polytheists, as Allah said about them:

> [And so, if they do not answer your call, know that they only follow their own *hawaa*, and who is more astray than the one who follows his own *hawaa* without guidance from Allah, and Allah does not guide those who oppress.] Qur'an 28/50

And, in another verse, Allah said:

> [(Allah) gives to you an analogy from your own selves: Do you have, among that which your right hands possess (i.e. slaves) any partners in that which Allah has given you such that they are equal to you. You fear them as you fear one another. Thus, we explain the signs to a people who understand. No, those who oppress follow their *hawaa* without knowledge. Then, who will guide the one who Allah sends astray, and they have no helpers.] Qur'an 30/28-29

And Allah said in another verse:

> [(Allah) has explained for you that which you have been forbidden in all except cases of absolute necessity. Verily, many go astray via (following) their own *hawaa* and without knowledge, and verily Allah is most knowledgeable of the violators.] Qur'an 6/119.

And, in another verse, Allah said:

> [Say: O, people of the book, do not introduce excesses into your *deen* which are not of the truth. And do not follow the hawaa of a people who have already gone astray. They have led many people astray, and have themselves become lost from the straight path.] Qur'an 5/77.

And, Allah said:

> [The Jews and the Christians will never be satisfied with you until you follow their traditions and ways. Say: verily, the guidance of Allah, that is the guidance. And if you follow their *hawaa* even after the knowledge which has come to you, you will have no protector nor any helper against Allah.] Qur'an 2/120.

And, again in Sura Al-Baqarah, Allah said:

> [And, if you follow their *hawaa* after the knowledge which has come to you, verily, you are of the oppressors.] Qur'an 2/145.

Allah said:

> [And judge between them with what Allah has sent down, and do not follow their *hawaa* and beware of them lest they tempt you away from **some** of what Allah has sent down to you.] Qur'an 5/49.

Thus whoever goes outside the dictates of the Qur'an and the Sunnah - among those who are called "scholars" or "worshippers" are known as the people of *hawaa*, just as the *salaf*, may Allah have mercy on them, used to refer to them as "*Ahlu -l-hawaa*) i.e. the people of *hawaa*.

This is because anyone who has not followed the knowledge has followed his *hawaa*. What's more, knowledge of the *deen* (way, or religion) does not come about except through the guidance of Allah with which He sent His Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam). Thus, Allah said:

> [And, verily many of them go astray by (following) their own hawaa and without knowledge.] Qur'an 6/119.

Allah said in another place:

> [Who is farther astray then the one who follows his own *hawaa* without guidance from Allah.] Qur'an 28/50.

What A Person Loves And Hates Must Be In Accordance With The Order Of Allah And His Prophet (Sallallahu `Alayhi Wa Sallam)

The obligation upon every slave of Allah, then, is to look very closely into his or her likes and dislikes, and the intensity of his love for that which he loves and his hate for that which he hates: is it in harmony with the order of Allah and His Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam)? This, then is the guidance of Allah which He sent down upon His Prophet such that he was ordered to have these loves and hates. In this way, a slave of Allah will avoid putting himself ahead of Allah and His Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam), because Allah said:

> O you who believe, do not put forth (anything) in front of Allah and His Prophet] Qur'an 49/1. i.e. Do not decide your position in any action or issue without first knowing the position of Allah and His Prophet therein.

Anyone who loves or hates before Allah and His Prophet have ordered him to do so, has entered the area of putting something forth in front of Allah and His Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam). Simple loves and hates are hawaa, but the *hawaa* which is forbidden to the Muslim is the **following** of these inclinations without guidance from Allah. This is why Allah said to His Prophet:

> [And do not follow your *hawaa* such that it leads you astray from the path of Allah. For those who go astray from the path of Allah there awaits a terrible punishment.] Qur'an 38/26.

Here Allah informs us that the **following** of one's *hawaa* will lead one astray from the path of Allah. The path of Allah is the guidance and the program with which He sent His Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam), and it is the path **to** Allah.

What Are "Good Works"?

In the final analysis, enjoining right and forbidding wrong is one of the most obligatory of actions and one of the best and most praiseworthy acts. Allah said:

> [And He will test you, which of you are best in actions.] Qur'an 67/2.

Al-Fadheel ibn Ayaadh (A great Makkan scholar of the second century) said about the "good actions" mentioned in this aya:

"(i.e.) The most sincere, and the most correct. Verily any action if it is done in complete sincerity, but is not correct, it is rejected, and if it is completely correct, but is not done with total sincerity, it is rejected. Only that which is done with complete sincerity to Allah and correctness according to Allah's law is acceptable. The sincere action is that which is purely for the sake of Allah, and the correct action that which is in the tradition (*Sunnah*).

It is a requirement of righteous deeds that they be done solely for the Face of Allah ta'ala, for Allah does not accept any actions except for those with which His Face alone was sought. This is as in the *sahih hadith* narrated by Abu Huraira that the Prophet said:

> "Allah ta'ala says: I am the partner least in need of any partner. Whenever someone does an act, partly for me and partly for an imagined partner, I am completely free of that action, and it is wholly for the partner which was associated with me."

This is the essence of *Tauhid* which is the basis of Islam. It is the *deen* of Allah with which He sent all of the Prophets. For its sake, He created the creation, and it is His **right** over all of His slaves: that they worship Him **alone**, and not associate with Him anything.

The righteous deeds which Allah and His Prophet have enjoined are simply **obedience**. Every act of obedience is a righteous deed, and it is the work dictated by the shari'a and the Sunnah. They are everything which has been enjoined upon us either as obligations or as commendable acts. This then is righteous deeds (*Al-'amal As-saalih*), and it is what is good (*hassan*), and it is righteousness (*Al-Birr*), and it is all that is good (*Al-khair*). Its opposite is disobedience (*Ma'siya*), and corrupt action (*Al-'amal Al-faasid*), bad deeds (*As-Sayyi'aat*), rebellion (*Al-fujuur*), oppression (*Adh-dhulm*), and transgression (*Al-baghyu*).

Every action must contain two thing: intention, and movement (action). Thus, the Prophet said:

> "The most truthful names are *Harith* (i.e. he who tills the earth) and *Hammaam* (one who ever sets objectives and seeks their fulfillment)."

Everyone is a tiller and a seeker of objectives he has actions, and he has intentions. However, the only praiseworthy intention which Allah accepts and rewards, is the intentions of doing an action **solely** for the sake of Allah.

The praiseworthy deed is the righteous deed, and it is the the deed with which we have been ordered. For this reason, Umar ibn Al-Khattab used to say in his *du'a*:

> "O, Allah make all of my deeds righteous, and make all of them purely for your Face, and do not make therein any share at all for anyone else."

This being the case for all righteous deeds, it is also the case for enjoining right and forbidding wrong, and it is necessary for it to be so (i.e. the act of ordering or forbidding must be good and praiseworthy which as we have seen means that it is correct **and** solely for the sake of Allah, is obedience to Allah, and is done for no ulterior motive.) This is in reference to the one who enjoins and forbids others.

Action Is Not Possible Except With Knowledge And Understanding

There can be no righteous deed in the absence of knowledge (*'ilm*) and understanding of the law (*fiqh*), as 'Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz (the grandson of 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab, and a righteous Khalifa) used to say:

> "Whoever worships Allah without knowledge corrupts more than he benefits."

And, as in the statement of Mu'adh ibn Jabal (a companion of the Prophet):

> "Knowledge is the *imam* of action, and action is a corollary to it."

This is obvious: intentions and actions which are not based on knowledge are ignorance and going astray, and following of *hawaa*, as we have said before. This is the difference between the people of *Jahiliya*, and the people of Islam. Thus, knowledge of the *Ma'ruf* and the *Munkar* are absolute necessities as are the ability to distinguish between them, and knowledge of the condition of those to be ordered and forbidden is also essential.

For optimum benefit, enjoining and forbidding should be performed on the Straight Path. The Straight Path is the shortest route, and the one which leads to the attainment of the sought-after goal.

Compassion, Patience & Forbearance Are Required In Enjoining Right

These things must be done with compassion. The Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said:

> "Compassion does not enter into anything without beautifying it, and is not removed from anything without making it ugly." (Muslim and others)

And, he (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said:

> "O, Aisha: Verily Allah is Compassionate, and He loves compassion. He gives based on compassion that which is not given based on force, and is not given based on any other cause." (Muslim and others)

At the same time, the practitioner of enjoining right and forbidding wrong must be forbearing and patient in the face of adversity and persecution. Persecution must, of necessity, confront the true practitioner of enjoining right. If he is not patient, forbearing and wise in the face of this, he will cause more corruption than reform. Allah tells us of Luqman saying to his son:

> [And enjoin all that is right, and forbid all that is wrong, and be patient in the face of that which afflicts you, verily, that is the most upright of positions.] Qur'an 31/17.

Thus, Allah ordered His prophets, and they are the *imam*'s of enjoining right and forbidding wrong, to have patience, just as He ordered the seal of the Prophets Muhammad (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam). The order to have patience came along with the order to deliver the message of Islam. When the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) was first ordered to deliver the message to the people, Allah sent *Sura Al-Mudaththir*, which followed after the revelation of the first five verses of *Sura Iqraa'* which announced the beginning of the prophethood. Allah said in *Al-Mudaththir*:

> [O, you covered in a blanket * Stand up and warn * And praise the greatness of your Lord * And purify your garments * And keep yourself well away from false gods and other forms of foolishness * And do not do all of this hoping for gain or payment * And for the sake of your Lord maintain **patience.**] Qur`an 74/1-7.

Allah began these seven ayas, with which He commissioned the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) to deliver the message to His creation, by ordering the Prophet to **warn**, and concluded them with the order to have **patience**. Warning people of Allah's punishment is of course enjoining them to do right and forbidding them the doing of wrong, so we see that patience is obligatory after undertaking the enjoining of right. In this vein, Allah said:

> [And be patient for the decree of your Lord, verily you are in our Eyes] Qur'an 52/48

> [And be patient with that which they say, and remove yourself from them in a gracious manner.] Qur`an 73/10

> [And so be patient, as the firmly-intentioned prophets were patient.] Qur`an 46/35.

> [So be patient for the decree of your Lord, and do not be as the man in the Whale (i.e. Jonah)] Qur`an 68/48

> [And be patient, and your patience is none other than by the leave of Allah.] Qur'an 16/127.

> [And have patience since, verily Allah does neglect the reward of the good-doers.] Qur'an 11/115.

Thus, three things are absolutely essential: knowledge, compassion, and patience. Knowledge is required before enjoining right and forbidding wrong, compassion is required during its practice, and patience is required after it. This separation is not to negate the fact that these three qualities need to be present at all times. This is similar to a statement narrated from the early generations of scholars and which has been attributed by some to the Prophet. Abu Ya'la mentioned it in his book entitled *Al-Mu'tamad* as follows:

> "None should enjoin right and forbid wrong except one who is knowledgeable in that which he enjoins, knowledgeable in that which he forbids, compassionate in that which he enjoins, compassionate in that which he forbids, forbearing in that which he enjoins, and forbearing in that which he forbids."

The Difficulty Of These Requirements

Make no mistake about it, these requirements of enjoining right and forbidding wrong introduce a high degree of difficulty into the situation for many people. Thus some imagine that the obligation has fallen from his shoulders because of some lack in its prerequisites, and so he neglects it. This may harm him more than he would have been harmed by ordering and forbidding in spite of his lacks or deficiencies in one or more of these requirements, or it may harm him less. Failing to carry out the obligation of enjoining right is disobedience to Allah, and committing what Allah has forbidden therein is also disobedience. One who flees from one act of disobedience to another is like one who seeks refuge from the frying pan by jumping into the fire, or like one who flees from one false religion to another, where the second one may be more evil than the first, or it may be less evil, and they may be equally evil. This is the same in the case of the one who neglects his obligations in enjoining right and forbidding wrong and the one who practices enjoining right, but transgresses and disobeys Allah therein. The sin of the first one may be greater than the second, or of the second one may be greater than the first, or they may be equally great.

Disobedience To Allah Causes Difficulty, Obedience Causes Ease

One thing which is clearly established from the signs which Allah has shown us between the horizons and in our selves, and with which He has born witness in His book -- is that disobedience is a cause of calamities and difficulties. The evil of calamities and punishments comes from the evil of ones actions. Also, obedience is a cause of plenty and ease. The doing of good of the slave is a reason for the doing of good by Allah to him. Allah said:

> [And whatever calamity befalls you, it is according to that which your own hands have earned - and Allah forgives much.] Qur'an 42/30

> [Whatever good comes to you is from Allah, and whatever evil comes to you is from your self.] Qur'an 4/79

> [Verily, those of you who turned their backs on the day when the two armies met, the Shaitan caused them to slip up because of some of what they had earned. Allah has forgiven them.] Qur'an 3/155

> [So, is it that when some calamity strikes you (in war), though you have previously inflicted a calamity twice its magnitude, you ask: Why is this? Say: It is from your own selves.] Qur'an 3/165

> [Or He may cause them to stop moving altogether (i.e. ships at sea) because of that which they have earned, and He forgives much.] Qur'an 42/34

> [And if they are afflicted with some calamity because of that which their own hands have sent forth, verily man is ever ungrateful, faithless] Qur'an 42/48

> [Allah is not about to punish them while you are amongst them, and He is not about to punish them while they (i.e. some among them) seek His forgiveness.] Qur'an 8/33

Allah's Punishment Of The Previous Nations For Their Disobedience

Allah has informed us of his punishment of the previous nations for their wickedness such as the people of *Nuh*, and *'aad*, *Thamud*, the people of *Lut*, the people of the city of *Madyan*, and the people of *Fir'aun* (Pharoah) in this world, and He has informed us of the punishments which await them in the next world. Thus, the believer who had been hiding his belief from the people of Fir'aun said, as Allah tells us in the Qur'an:

> [O, my people, verily I fear for you something like the days of the nations who came before, something like the punishment which befell the people of *Nuh*, *'aad*, *Thamud*, and those who came after them. Allah does not intend any oppression of His slaves. And O, my people, verily I fear for you the day of calling to one another, on that day you will turn your backs and run in fear, and there will be none who can protect you from Allah. Whosoever Allah sends astray has no one whatsoever who can guide him.] Qur'an 40/30-33

And Allah said in another aya about the punishment in this world:

> [Such is the punishment, and the punishment in the next world is greater, if only they knew.] Qur'an 68/33

> [We will punish them twice, and then they will be returned to a mighty torment.] Qur'an 9/101

> [We will give them a taste of the minor punishment before the greater punishment, that they might turn back (i.e. to what is right)] Qur'an 32/21

> [So, watch for day when the sky will come with a distinct smoke * It covers the people; this is a painful punishment * Our Lord! Relieve us of this torment. Verily, we are believers. * How will that (i.e. removing their torment) cause them to remember and believe when a Messenger has already come to them with clear signs? * And they turned away from him saying: "...taught by others" and "...afflicted by jinn". * Verily, we will remove the punishment from them a little, and verily, they will go right back. * On that day when we will strike out the greatest of blows, verily our vengeance will be complete.] Qur'an 44/10-16

Punishment Of The Evil-Doers In This World And The Next

Thus, in many of *ayaat* containing warnings for those who disobey Allah, Allah mentions His punishment of the evil-doers in this world as well as the punishment which He has prepared for them in the next life. In other verses, He mentions only the punishments of the next life, because its punishment is much greater, and its reward is much greater, and it is the place of permanence. So, when the punishments of this world are mentioned, they are secondary to the mentioning of the punishments of the next life, as in the following story of Yusuf (peace be upon him):

> [In this way we empowered Yusuf in the earth, he moves therein wherever he pleases. We will not negate the reward of those who do good, and the reward of the next life is better for those who believe, and used to fear Allah.] Qur'an 12/56-57

> [And so Allah gave them the reward of this life, and the best of rewards for the next life.] Qur'an 3/148

> [And those who migrated for the sake of Allah after they had been oppressed, we will establish them in the earth in a goodly fashion, and the reward of the next life is greater, if they only knew. Those who have patience, and depend fully on their Lord.] Qur'an 16/41-42

Allah said about Ibrahim (upon him be peace) in another aya:

> [And we gave him his reward in this life, and verily he is among the righteous in the next life.] Qur'an 16/122

As for what Allah has mentioned about the **punishment** of this life and the next, we can look to *Sura An-naazi'aat* in which He said:

> [By those (angels) who violently tear out (the souls of the wicked at death) * And by those who gently draw out (the souls of the righteous at death)] Qur'an 79/1-2

And then, in the same *Sura*, Allah said:

> [On that day when the great trembling and quaking occurs (upon the first sounding of the Horn, which signals Allah's putting to death of all creation) * Which is followed by another, similar (the second sounding of the Horn, which signals the bringing to life of the whole creation)] Qur'an 79/6-7

in which He mentioned the day of Qiyama in general, and then He said:

> [Has the story of Musa reached you? * When his Lord called him in the sacred valley of Tuwa * (Saying) Go to Fir'aun, for verily he has transgressed * And say to him: Do you have any desire to be purified? * And that I should guide you to your Lord so that you should fear Him? * Then Musa showed him the Great Sign * But Fir'aun rejected and disobeyed * Then he turned away, striving hard (against the truth) * Then he collected his forces, and made a proclamation * Saying: I am your lord, most high * So Allah destroyed him, and made an example of him in the hereafter, and in this life * Verily in this there is an instructive warning for those who fear Allah.] Qur'an 79/15-26

Then, Allah mentioned the place of beginning, and the place of return in detail saying:

> [Are you more difficult to create or the heavens? Allah has constructed them * He raised high the canopy, and gave it order and perfection * ... * And so, when the great overwhelming event arrives (i.e. Qiyama) * On that day, man will remember all that he used to strive for * And hell-fire will be made plainly visible for all who see * Then, as for the one who transgressed * And preferred the life of this world * Verily (for such) the fire is the final abode *

And as for those who had fear of their standing before their Lord, and forbid themselves the dictates of their *hawaa* * Verily the Garden (of Paradise) is their final abode.] Qur'an 79/27-28, 34-41

Also, in *Sura al-Muzammil*, Allah mentions His own statement:

[And leave me with those who deny the truth, who possess the good things of this life, and leave them for a short time * Verily, we have fetters (to bind them) and fire (to burn them) * And food that chokes, and a painful punishment * One day, the earth and the mountains will tremble and quake, and the mountains will be like a heap of sand poured out and flowing down * Verily, we have sent to you a Prophet as a witness over you, just as we sent to Fir'aun a Prophet * But Fir'aun disobeyed the Prophet, so we seized him with a heavy punishment.] Qur'an 73/11-16

Also, in *Sura Al-Haaqqa*, Allah mentions the stories of the disbelieving nations such as *Thamud*, *'aad*, and *Fir'aun*, and then says:

[When a single blast is sounded on the Horn * And the earth and the mountains are lifted up and crushed to powder at a single stroke.] Qur'an 69/13-14

Then, in verses 15-37 Allah describes the people of heaven and hell, and their condition on the day of Qiyama and after.

In *Sura Al-Qalam*, Allah mentions the story of the owners of the garden (i.e. farm) who conspired to withhold the rights of the poor from them and were punished by the destruction of their crop. Then Allah says:

[Such is the punishment, and the punishment of the hereafter is of greater magnitude, if they only knew.] Qur'an 68/33

Again, in *Sura At-Taghaabun*, Allah says:

[Didn't the news reach you of those who rejected faith before? * They tasted the results of their actions, and for them is a painful punishment * That was because Messengers used to come to them with clear signs, but they said: "Should mere human beings guide us?" So they rejected faith, and turned away. And Allah is in no need. Allah is free of all needs, worthy of all praise *

> The disbelievers imagine that they will not be raised up (for judgement) Say: Yes, by my Lord, you will be raised up, then you will be informed of all that you did, and that is very easy for Allah.] Qur'an 64/5-7

Allah has mentioned the condition of those who oppose and disobey the prophets, as well as the threatened punishments which await them in the hereafter in many chapters of the Qur`an. Among them: *Qaf*, *Al-Qamar*, *Al-Mu'min*, *As-Sajdah*, *Az-Zukhruf*, *Ad-Dukhaan*, and many others.

Promises And Threats Of Punishment Were The First Part Of Revelation

Tauhid, promises of rewards, and threats of punishments were the first things to be revealed of the Qur'an. In Sahih Bukhari, Yusuf ibn Maahak narrates:

> "I was at Aisha's, the Mother of the believers may Allah be pleased with her, when an Iraqi came to her and said: "Which shroud is best?" Aisha said: "Woe to you, what harms you?" He said: "O, mother of the believers, show me your *mus-haf*" Aisha said: "Why?" He said: "In order that I may arrange and order the Qur'an according to it, for it is being read with no particular order." Aisha said: "What is the harm to you whichever of it you read first? Verily, the first of it to be revealed was a *sura* among the short suras in which is mentioned heaven and hell. After the people came to submission (Islam), the *halal* and the *haram* were revealed. If the first thing to be revealed were "Do not drink intoxicants" they would have said: "We will never leave our intoxicants." And if the first thing to be revealed were "Do not commit fornication and adultery.", they would have said: "We will never leave fornication." Verily, the following verse was revealed to Muhammad in Makka while I was a young girl playing: [No, the hour of judgement is more grievous and more bitter (i.e. than any hardships a Muslim may find in the path of Allah in this life)], and the chapters of *Al-Baqarah* and *An-Nisaa* (which contain extensive rulings on the halal and the haram) were only revealed while I was with him (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) as his wife." Then Aisha took our her *mus-haf* and dictated to him the verses of the chapter."

Differences About Enjoining & Forbidding Are The Cause Of Division

Kufr, corruption, and disobedience are the cause of evil and strife. A person or group may fall into sin and disobedience. Then another group keeps quiet, and does not fulfill their obligation of enjoining right and forbidding wrong, and that becomes a sin of **theirs**. And another group enjoins and forbids, but in a manner forbidden by Allah, and that becomes a sin of **theirs**. The end result is division, difference, strife, and evil. This is one of the greatest sources of evil and chaos in all times, former and present. This is because man is by nature *dhaloom* (ever given to criminality), and *jahool* (ever given to ignorance and foolishness). See Qur'an 72/33. This criminality or oppression, and this foolishness are of different types. The oppression and foolishness of the first person or group (i.e. the one committing the original disobedience of Allah) is of one type, while the oppression and foolishness of the second and third groups (those who knew and kept quiet, and those who enjoined and forbid in a manner not allowed by Islam) is of other types.

Anyone who contemplates the strife and chaos which afflicts the Muslims will see that this is indeed their reason. All of the confusion which occurs between the rulers of the *Ummah*, and its scholars, and those who follow them among the common people has this as its root cause. Also in this category are the various causes of going astray: *hawaa* in both religious and worldly matters, innovation (*bid'a*) in religion, and depravity in this life. These things are general, and afflict the entire human race, because of the element in them of criminality and foolishness. Thus, some of the people sin by oppressing themselves (i.e. by any disobedience to Allah) or others by committing fornication or homosexuality or drinking intoxicants, or economic crimes such as betraying of trusts, stealing, taking peoples property by intimidation, and other such crimes.

Sins Are Desired By Human Nature

It is known that these sins and acts of disobedience, though understood to be detestable and blameworthy by intellectual reasoning and by the criteria of Islam, are desired by human nature. It is a normal condition of the human self that it does not like others to have what it has not, or to have more of something than it, rather, it wishes for the good which has come to others to come to it. This is known in Arabic as *Ghabta* which is the lesser of the two forms of envy. Thus, the human self wishes to be superior or over others, and to be preferred to them, or it is envious of them, and wishes for the destruction of the good things which have come to others, even if it will not itself obtain it (this is the

extreme form of envy). So, the human self contains these elements of desiring superiority, corruption, pride, and envy which makes it wish to possess its desires over and above others. How will such a self feel when it sees others having possessed what it desires while it has not obtained it? The more reasonable of them desires that all may have their desires on an equal basis, and cannot tolerate some having more than them, as for the others (i.e. who wish for the destruction of the good things possessed by others because they have not been able to obtain it), they are envious oppressors.

These two types of envy occur in relation to things which Islam allows as well as in relation to things which are forbidden by the rights of Allah over His slaves. As for that which is of the first type such as food and drink, spouses, clothes, riding animals, and wealth, the exclusive possession of these things by some and not others can be a cause of oppression, miserliness, and envy.

Greed Is The Cause Of Slipping Into Deviation

The origin of all of these problems is greedy desire (*shuhh*). The Prophet explains this in the following sahih hadith:

> "Beware of *shuhh* (greedy desire), for verily it destroyed those who came before you. It ordered them to be miserly and they were miserly, it ordered them to commit oppression and they oppressed, and it ordered them to cut family ties and they cut family ties."

For this reason, Allah praised the *Ansar* (the Muslims of Madinah who received those who migrated from Makka, and helped them) for having the opposite characteristics, saying:

> [And those who had prepared the place of dwelling and (accepted) the faith before them (i.e. before those who migrated from Makka) love those who migrated to them, and find in their hearts no need of the good things which they have been given. (i.e. they feel no envy for that which their brothers the Migrators have been given.) And they prefer (others) even over their own selves, even though they are in need. **And whoever is protected from the *shuhh* of his own self, these are the successful ones.**] Qur'an 59/9

Abdur-Rahman ibn 'Auf - a companion of the Prophet - was heard saying as he made his *Tawaaf* around the *Ka'aba*:

> "O Lord, protect me from the *shuhh* of my own self. O Lord, protect me from the *shuhh* of my own self."

When he was asked about this du'a of his, he said:

> "If I am protected from the *shuhh* of my own self, I will be protected from miserliness, oppression, and breaking of family ties."

Shuhh, which is the greedy desire of the self, causes miserliness by withholding objects of desire which have been acquired, and causes oppression by the taking of the property of others, and causes breaking of family ties, and it causes envy - which is to hate others possessing what one does not have, and wishing for its destruction. Envy itself entails miserliness and oppression, since envy is miserliness with that which one has been given, and oppression by wishing for others to lose the good which they have acquired.

This being the case of those desired things which are *halal*, what about those desired things which are *haram*, such as fornication, drinking intoxicants,etc.? When some people acquire or practice such things, two types of hatred of come about: 1) To hate it because of others having what one has not i.e. out of some form of envy such as occurs in things which are *halal* and 2) To hate it for the sake of Allah, and because of the violation it entails of the rights of Allah over His slaves.

Types Of Sins

For this reason, sins are of three type:

(1) Sins which entail oppression of others, such as taking of people's property, or denying them their rights, or envy or others (of the greater type), etc.

(2) Sins which entail only oppression of one's self, such as drinking intoxicants, and fornication when its harm does not affect others.

(3) Sins which entail both of the above, such as an Amir or ruler who takes the peoples property so that he can use it for fornication or using intoxicants, or other crimes. Another

example is one who commits illegal sexual acts with someone, and then exposes this to the people in order to do harm to the persons involved, as is often seen from those obsessed with women and young boys. Allah said:

> [Say, all that my Lord has forbidden is despicable acts, that which is apparent and that which is hidden, and sins, and transgression without justification, and that you associate with Allah that for which no authority has been sent, and that you say about Allah that which you know not.] Qur'an 7/33

Success In Worldly Affairs Is By Justice

The affairs of the people will go straight with the presence of **justice** which may be mixed with some types of sin more than they will go straight in the presence of oppression and injustice in the rights of the people, even if it is not mixed with other sins. Thus, it has been said: "Allah establishes the just state even if it is disbelieving, and does not establish the oppressing state, even if it is Muslim."

It has been said: "The affairs of this world last with justice and *kufr*, but they do not last with oppression and Islam."

The Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said:

> "The quickest of evils to be punished are injustice and breaking of family ties." (Ibn Majah)

Thus, the unjust transgressor is overcome in this life, even though he may eventually be forgiven in the hereafter.

This is because justice is the system of everything. So, when the affairs of this world are established with justice, they last and are strong, even though its author may have no share in the rewards of the hereafter, and when they are not established with justice, they do not last, even though its author(s) may have that faith for which they may be rewarded in the hereafter.

Human Nature: Tyranny, Envy & Oppression

Within the human self is a drive to oppress others by tyrannizing them, and by envying them, and by violating their rights. Within it, also, are drives to oppress itself by indulging in despicable acts, such as adultery and consuming unclean things. Thus, a person may oppress others without first being oppressed, and may lust after those indulgences, even though no one around him is doing them. **However, when he sees his peers oppressing, or indulging in these desires, a drive appears in him to do these things which is much stronger than previously.**

This may also bring about in a person hatred of those having the object of his lower desire, and his envy of them, and his desire for their punishment and the removal of that thing which they have which were not otherwise there. He has an ample justification for this from the direction of intellectual reasoning, and from the principles of Islam because of the fact that those who he opposes are oppressing themselves and the Muslims as a whole, and his enjoining right and forbidding wrong and fighting *jihad* in the pursuit of that appears to be from Islam.

Categories Of People In This Issue

People, with respect to this issue, can be divided into three categories:

One group does not become aroused except by the *hawaa* of their own selves. They are not contented except with those things which they have been given, and do not anger except because of something which they have been denied. If such a person is given all that he desires from the *halal* and the *haram*, his anger disappears, and he is contented. When he is given his desires, those things which he called evil, which he actively forbid others and punished them for indulging in them, became angry with them, and openly criticized them, when he obtains these things, he suddenly becomes an indulger in them, and a partner and helper of their users, and a staunch enemy of those who order the people to stay away from these things, and point out to them their evil. This is widespread among the sons of Adam. We all see and hear examples of this whose number is unknown except to Allah. Its cause is that man is, as Allah said, ever given to criminality (*dhaloom*), and ever given to ignorance and foolishness (*jahool*). And so, many never practice justice; rather, they may be oppressors in both states. For example, there may be a group of people who criticize the oppression of the ruler and his transgression on the rights of the

citizens, and so the ruler appeases them with some position or money. Suddenly, they become the biggest helpers and supporters of this unjust government or ruler. It would have been better for them if they just kept quiet, and refrained from enjoining right and forbidding wrong in the first place.

In the same way, you can see these people acting very harshly with those who take intoxicants, fornicate and listen to music until they manage to get him involved in their sins, or appease him with some of the pleasures in which they indulge. At that time, you will see them becoming the biggest supporters of those acts which they opposed so harshly previously. Such people, when they undertake enjoining right and forbidding wrong may come into a state worse than their state before they began, or perhaps not quite as bad, or equal to it.

Others, have taken the correct stand of religiosity and piety. They are in that sincere to Allah, and in their actions reformers, and bringers of good. In this they are granted success such that they are able to be patient and forbearing in the face of persecution. These are "those who believe and do good works", and they are of "the best nation brought forth for the people: they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, and they believe in Allah."

A third group, combines the characteristics of the first group and those of the second, and these are the majority of the believers. Whoever combines piety and lusts and desires has in his heart a will to be obedient to Allah, and a will to disobey Allah in obedience to his desires. Sometimes the first one prevails, and sometimes the second one prevails.

This triple division is analogous to the division of the souls of people into three types, as alluded to in the Qur'an: *Ammaara* (that which always orders, i.e. evil), *Lawwaama* (that which always criticizes and holds to account, i.e. after doing evil, this soul criticizes itself and repents), and *Mut'ma'innah* (at peace, i.e. the soul which obeys Allah without any inner contradictions). Thus, the first group above is the possessors of the soul which is *Ammaara*, i.e. which always orders them to do evil, and the second group above is the possessors of the soul which is *Mut'ma'innah*, to which Allah will say on the day of Qiyama:

> [O, you souls at peace: Come back to your Lord, contented and accepted, and enter in among by slaves, and enter into my paradise.] Qur'an 89/27-30

The third and largest group are the possessors of the soul which is *Lawwaamah*, which commits sins and then blames itself for them. It changes colors, sometimes like this, and sometimes like that. It "mixes a good work with another which is evil". It is hoped that

Allah will forgive these people provided that they acknowledge their sins and repent, as Allah said:

> [And others have acknowledged their sins. They mixed a good work with another which was evil. Perhaps Allah will forgive them, verily Allah is most-Forgiving, most-Merciful.] Qur'an 9/102

It is for this reason that during the Caliphates of Abu Bakr and Umar - and they are the two which the Muslims have been ordered to emulate, as the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said:

> "Follow the example of the two who come after me: Abu Bakr and Umar." (At-Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, and Ahmad)

Since the Muslims were still close to the era of the revelation, and greater in faith and piety, and their leaders were more conscientious in fulfilling their duties, and more at peace and free from inner contradictions - the chaos and bloodshed and strife which followed was absent during their two Caliphates. This is because they were as the people of the second category: those whose selves are at Peace and free from inner contradictions about Islam.

Then, at the end of Uthman's Caliphate, and during the Caliphate of Ali (May Allah be pleased with them both), those of the third category became more numerous. Thus, there appeared in the Muslims desires and lusts along with the presence of belief and Islamic practice. This became the case of some of the administrators, and some of the citizens. Then the problem became worse, and the major *fitna* (strife) came to pass whose cause is as we have described earlier. Both sides failed to properly analyze the dictates of piety and obedience to Allah. Both sides mixed their understanding of piety and obedience with some element of *hawaa* and disobedience. Each side, in their own interpretation, believing that they are enjoining right and forbidding wrong, and that they are on the side of truth and justice. This interpretation, however, contains an element of *hawaa*, and an element of suspicion, and following the desires of the self, even though one of the two sides was closer to the truth than the other.

For this reason, it is upon the believer to constantly pray to Allah to help him, and to depend fully on Allah to fill his heart with faith and piety, and not to let it become contaminated, and to establish him firmly on the guidance, and to protect him from following his *hawaa*, as Allah said:

> [And so for this, pray, and remain steadfast as you have been ordered, and do not follow their *hawaa*. And say: I have believed in the book which Allah has sent down, and I have been ordered to enact justice between you. Allah is our Lord and your Lord.] Qur'an 42/15

Good Must Support Good As Bad Supports Bad

This is also the condition of the *Ummah* in those issues over which it has become divided and has differed over statements and acts of worship. These issues are among the things which bring about great trials upon the believers. They are in desparate need of two things: They need to repel the evil with which their peers have been afflicted, both in affairs of religion and worldly affairs, away from themselves, in spite of the drive within themselves calling to the same things. They, too, have selves and *shayateen* (i.e. calling them to evil), just as those who have already fallen into evil. Thus, when evil is seen from their peers, the evil tendencies within themselves are increased. So, even after eliminating the evil around them, the believers will remain with the evil drives within themselves and from the *wiswaas* of the *shaitan*. Motivators toward good are an exactly analogous situation: The believers are in need of bringing about the doing of good in others as a motivator toward good, as well as following their own, internal tendencies toward good.

This is why there are so many people who never aspire to good nor to evil until they see someone else - especially among those they view as "peers" - doing a particular action. At that point, they will become interested and undertake that action, too. People are like the feathers of an owl, they instinctually gravitate toward conformity and imitation of each other.

For this reason, the reward and the responsibility of one who establishes a new action for the first time is the same as those who follow him therein. The Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said:

> "Whoever establishes a good tradition will receive his reward for it together with the rewards of all those who follow it until the day of Qiyama, without that reducing their rewards in the least. And whoever establishes a bad tradition will be assigned its full responsibility together with the responsibility of all those who follow it until the day of Qiyama, without reducing their responsibility in the least." (Muslim)

This is because their reality is one, and the status of anything is the status of its equals, and that which is similar to something is an extension of it.

Now, since these two motivators are very strong (i.e. the inner drives towards good and towards evil, and the added motivation resulting from seeing others doing good or doing evil), imagine the situation when two additional motivators are added to them:

This is the situation wherein many of the people of evil love anyone who agrees with them and their program, and the hate those who do not agree with them. This is very clear among the various false religions: each group is exceedingly loyal and devoted to (and only to) those who agree with them, and is exceedingly hostile towards those who do not agree with their programs or beliefs. This is frequently the case in worldly desires as well. Those who indulge in a particular form of pleasure consistently choose and prefer as friends and companions those who share their particular indulgence. This may be in order to aid one another in their pursuit of their pleasure, as in the case of those who conspire together to take over and tyrannize a country, or to form gangs and rob people and such like. Or, it may be simply for the sweetness of company and agreement, as in the case of those who come together to take intoxicants. They want everyone present to partake of their drink, and cannot tolerate the presence of a non-drinker. Perhaps this is due to their hatred of his being better than they are by staying away from their sin, or out of envy of his ability to resist temptation, or that he may not appear superior to them, and be praised by the people for his abstention despite their indulgence, or in order that he will have no argument or evidence against them, or because they are in fear of being turned over for punishment by him or by others, or for fear that he may "blackmail" them with that, and humiliate them, or other such reasons. Allah said:

> [Many of the people of the book wish that they could turn you back, after your faith, to be disbelievers out of envy originating within their own selves, that even after the truth has become clear to them.] Qur'an 2/109

And He said about the hypocrites:

> [They wish that you would disbelieve as they have disbelieved, so that you would (all) be the same.} Qur'an 4/89

The Khalifa Uthman ibn Affaan once said:

> "The Adulteress wishes that all women would commit adultery."

Their coming together in indulgence may be sharing in the very same sin, such as drinking of intoxicants together, telling lies and spreading forgeries, and holding corrupt beliefs. Or, they may choose to share in the sin in the abstract sense, as in the case of the adulterer who wishes that others would also commit adultery, or the thief who wishes that others would steal -- they wish that others would partake of their type of sin, but *not* of the very same object which they desire to steal, or to have in illegal sexual relations.

The second additional motivator is as follows: They may enjoin upon an individual to participate with them in their unlawful actions; if he agrees to participate, he is left alone, but if he resists, they become his active enemies, persecuting him in a manner which may even become coercion.

Then, these self-same people who wish for the participation of others in their despicable actions, or actually order them to do so, and seek the aid of others in order to bring him into their ways, at that point when he agrees to participate in their actions, and aid them, and obey them, they will at that point hold him in very little esteem, and will belittle and look down on him. This then, will become their argument and evidence against him and against listening to anything he says in other areas as well. (They call and incite him to a particular act, which they themselves are already doing, and when he finally succumbs, this is evidence used to disgrace him in the eyes of the people!!) This is the state of most of the oppressors who have been given some power in the land.

These same motivators which are present in the doing of evil is also present with respect to doing good and its doers, and is even stronger. As Allah said:

> [And those who believe are stronger in love for Allah] Qur'an 2/166

Verily, every person also has an internal drive calling him to faith and knowledge, truthfulness and justice, and fulfillment of trusts. Thus, if he finds others who do these things as he does, there arises an additional motivator, especially if they are what he regards as "peers", and especially if there is a spirit of "competition" in doing of good. This is a praiseworthy type of competition.

Then, if he finds others who love his agreement with them in what is good, and his participation in it from among the righteous believers, who also hate him when he deviates or does not do what is good, there arises a third motivator.

Then, if they order him to do right, and are loyal and dedicated to him when he does, and oppose him and punish him when he neglects it, there arises a fourth motivator.

Evil Must Be Met With Good

For this reason, the believers have been ordered to face evil deeds with their opposites, just as the doctor meets illness with its opposite. So, the believer is ordered to reform himself, and that is by means of two things: doing of good deeds, and avoiding bad deeds. This in spite of the forces and motivators which oppose the doing of good, and encourage the doing of evil, and these are both of four types, as we have said.

The believer is also ordered to reform others with all four of these motivators to the extent of his power and capability. Allah said:

> [By the passing of time * Verily, man is in abject loss * Except those who believe and do good works * And remind one another of the truth, and advise one another to have patience.] Qur'an 103

It is narrated that Imam Ash-Shafi'i said: "If all of the people pondered *Sura Al-Asr*, it would be sufficient for them."

It is as he said. Allah has informed us in this sura that all of the people are in abject loss, except those who are in themselves righteous believers, and with others a reminder of truth, and advisor of having patience.

The Severity Of The Test Causes Elevation Of Rank

When the test becomes severe, that is for the righteous believer a cause for the elevation of his rank, and the greatness of his reward, as can be seen in the following hadith:

> "The Prophet was asked: `Which people are most severely tested?' He said: `The prophets, then the righteous ones, then others in descending order of their righteousness. Each one is tested in accordance to his belief: if firmness is found therein, his trials are increased, if, on the other hand, he is weak and wavering in belief, his trials are lightened. The believer will continue to be

> subjected to trials and tests until he walks on the surface of the earth without a single sin upon him.'"

Thus, he needs patience more than others, and that is the cause of leadership (Imamate) in faith, as Allah said:

> [And we made them leaders (imams) who guide (the people) by our order as long as they were patient, and had a certainty of belief in our signs.] Qur'an 32/24

Patience Is Necessary In The Doing Of Good

A Muslim must have patience in doing what he has been ordered, and in avoiding what he has been forbidden and prohibited. Also included in this is patience in the face of persecution, and upon being spoken ill of, and patience in the face of the various calamities. Also, patience is required in times of ease and plenty so that one does not become proud, boastful, and haughty, and other types of patience.

The Need For Certainty Of Belief

It is not possible for one to have patience if he has nothing from which to derive inner peace, something from which he attains joy and which gives him sustenance: certainty of faith. The Prophet said in hadith:

> "Ask Allah for forgiveness and good health for, verily, after certainty of faith, no one has been given anything better than good health."

In the same way, when he orders others to do good, or loves their agreement with what is correct, or forbids others the doing of evil, he needs to be very good towards those others with which he wishes to work in this way with a graciousness which brings about the success of his intention: the removal of that which he dislikes, and the attainment of that which he likes. Human souls cannot tolerate something bitter unless it is mixed with something sweet. Nothing else is possible. For this reason, Allah ordained the institution of the binding of hearts (*ta'leef ul-quluub*), even assigning to those whose hearts are to be drawn in a portion of the *Zakat*. Allah said to His Prophet:

[Choose forbearance, and enjoin all that is right, and turn away from the foolish ones.} Qur'an 7/199

And, Allah said in another aya:

[And, advise one another to have patience, and urge one another to acts of compassion.] Qur'an 90/17

It is necessary for the enjoiner and forbidder to be patient and to be compassionate, and that is true courage and true generosity.

For this reason, Allah mentions prayer and zakat together many times in the Qur'an, and zakat is graciousness towards Allah's creation, and mentions prayer and patience together on other occasions. All three are essential: prayer, zakat, and patience. The affairs of the believer will not go straight except with these three in relation to his reforming of himself, and in the reforming of others, especially when trials and strife are rampant, then the need for these qualities becomes more severe.

The need for forbearance and patience is common to the entire human race; their affairs will never be straightened out except with these qualities. For this reason, all societies and cultures praise courage and generosity to the extent that most of the poems which have been composed to praise someone dwell on these two qualities. In the same vein, all societies and cultures hold as blameworthy the opposing qualities of miserliness and cowardice.

Any issue about which the thinkers of the entire human race agree cannot be anything but the truth, such as their agreement on the praiseworthiness of truthfulness and justice, and the blameworthiness of lying and oppression. The Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) was once asked questions by some bedouins until they forced him over near a tree on which his cloak became caught. He turned to them and said:

"By the one in whose hand is my soul, if I possessed camels equal to the number of these thorns, I would divide them all between you, and you would not find me to be miserly, nor cowardly, nor untruthful."

This value judgement, however, takes various forms according to specific cases and details and, verily, works are judged by intentions, and to every person is that which he intended.

Criticism Of Miserliness And Cowardice

For this reason, miserliness and cowardice are frequently criticized in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and courage and forbearance in the path of Allah are praised - in the path of Allah specifically as opposed to that which is not in the path of Allah. The Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said:

> "The most evil things which can be found in a person are greedy desire which influences all of his actions, and cowardice which makes him flee."

And, he said:

> "Who is your head man O, children of Salamah?" They said: "Al-Jadd ibn Qais, even though we criticize in him miserliness." The Prophet said: "And what defect is more serious than miserliness!?"

In another version of the above hadith, the Prophet is reported to have said:

> "Verily, no head man can be miserly, rather your head man is Al-Abyadh Al-Ja'ad Al-Baraa' ibn Ma'rur."

Similarly, in the *sahih* the statement of Jabir ibn Abdullah to Abu Bakr As-Siddique radhiallahu `anhu):

> "You can either give me, or you can be miserly (*tabkhalu 'anniy*.)" Abu Bakr said: "Do you say you can either give me, or you can be miserly?! And which defect is more serious than miserliness?!"

Abu Bakr, like the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) considered miserliness to be one of the most serious diseases or defects.

In Sahih Muslim, on the authority of Sulaiman ibn Rabi'ah:

> Umar said: "The Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) carried out a division of property, and I said: `By Allah, others are more deserving than these (who have been given).' The Prophet said: `They gave me the choice, either they would ask me in an improper and outrageous manner, or they would call me miserly, and I am not a miser.'"

The prophet here is saying: They have asked me in a way which is not proper, so that if I give them, that is fine, but if I do not, they will say "He is miserly." Thus, they gave me the choice between two evils, and left me no other choice: improper asking, or being called miserly. Being called a miser is more serious of an evil, so I repel the greater evil by giving them.

Types Of Miserliness

Miserliness is a general category within which are various types - some are major sins, and some are not major sins.

Allah said:

> [Let not those who were miserly with what Allah gave them of His bounty imagine that it is good for them, rather it is very bad for them. They will be emburdened with all that they were miserly with on the day of Qiyama.] Qur'an 3/180
>
> [Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and be gracious towards your two parents ... Verily Allah loves not every proud and arrogant one, those who are miserly, and enjoin miserliness on others.] Qur'an 4/36-37
>
> [And nothing prevented their (i.e. the hypocrites) expenditures from being accepted except for the fact that they have rejected faith in Allah and in His Prophet. They attend the prayer only with laziness, and they spend of their wealth only reluctantly and with dislike.] Qur'an 9/54
>
> [And, when He gave them of His bounty, they were miserly with it. They turned away, rejecting. And so, Allah decreed for them after that hypocrisy in their hearts until the day when they will meet Him.] Qur'an 9/76-77
>
> [Whoever is miserly, denies only himself] Qur'an 47/38
>
> [And so woe unto those who pray * But are unmindful of their prayers * Those who only strive (in their prayers) to be seen by people, and who withhold even minor acts of generosity.] Qur'an 107

> [As for those who build up wealth of gold and silver, and do not spend of it in the path of Allah, warn them of a painful punishment. On the day when it (i.e. the gold and silver) will be heated up on the fires of hell, and it will be used to brand their foreheads and their sides and their backs, (it will be said to them:) This is what you hoarded away for your selves, so taste that which you used to hoard.] Qur'an 9/34-35

There are very many verses in the Qur'an which enjoin giving and spending and generosity, and criticize whoever neglects them, and all of that is a criticism of miserliness.

Criticism Of Cowardice

In the Qur'an, Allah's criticism of cowardice is also found in very many verses, such as in the following:

> [And anyone who gives them (i.e. the enemy in war) his back on that day (of battle) except as a stratagem of warfare, or to regroup with other fighters, has come back with a great anger from Allah, and his dwelling place is hell, and what an evil place to end up.] Qur'an 8/16

> [And they (i.e. the hypocrites) swear by Allah that they are of you, while they are not of you, rather they are a people afraid (to oppose the believers openly) * If they were to find any place of refuge or some caves, or even any uncomfortable place in which to conceal themselves, they would turn to it in great haste (because of the intensity of their concealed hatred for Islam and the Muslims).] Qur'an 9/56-57

> [When a clear chapter is sent down and fighting is mentioned therein, you can see those in whose hearts is disease looking at you as one in the throes of death.] Qur'an 47/20

> [Did you not see those to whom it was said: "Be non-violent, establish the prayer, and give the Zakat?" And then, when fighting was made obligatory upon them, lo, some of them fear people as the fear of Allah or an even stronger fear. They say: "Our Lord, why have you made fighting obligatory upon us? If only you were to give us respite for a short time!" Say: "The

> provision of this lower life is but little, and the hereafter is better for those who have piety, and you will not be mistreated or dealt with unjustly in the least.] Qur'an 4/77

Every verse in the Qur'an in which Allah urges the believers to *jihad*, and explains its desirability, and harshly criticizes those who turn away from it and neglect it all of that constitutes a condemnation of cowardice.

Human Affairs Will Not Go Straight Except With Courage And Generosity

Since reform of human affairs in this world and the next will not be perfected except with the presence of courage and generosity, Allah has explained to us that anyone who turns his back on courage - by failing to struggle in the path of Allah - will be replaced by others who will fulfill their duties. And whoever turns away from the spending of their property in the path of Allah, will be replaced by others who will fulfill their duties. Allah said:

> [O, you who believe, what is wrong with you such that when you are called to come forth in the path of Allah, you become heavy, stuck to the earth? Are you contented with the life of this world in preference to the hereafter? Verily, the provisions of this life are but little in relation to the hereafter. If you fail to come forth, Allah will punish you a painful punishment, will replace you with another people, and you will not harm Allah in the least. Allah is capable of all things.] Qur'an 9/38-39

> [You are the ones, you are called to spend in the path of Allah. Then, some of you are miserly and withhold. And whoever withholds denies only himself. Allah is wealthy, free of all needs, and you are the impoverished ones. If you turn away, Allah will replace you with another people, and they will not be like you.] Qur'an 47/38

It was courage and generosity with which Allah preferred "those who came before" (*as-Saabiquun*), saying:

> [They are not the same, those of you who spent (in the path of Allah) and fought and struggled before the victory - these have a greater reward than

> those who only spent of their wealth and struggled and fought after that, and to each of them, Allah has promised good.] Qur'an 57/10

Allah has mentioned *jihad* with ones life and ones property in His path, and praised them in many verses of His book. This is courage and forbearance in obedience to Allah ta'ala. Allah said:

> [How many small groups have overcome large groups with the permission of Allah? Allah is with those who have patience.] Qur'an 2/249

> [O, you who believe, when you meet (an opposing) army, be steadfast and remember Allah much, that you may be successful. And obey Allah and His Prophet, and do not disagree such that you cause your own defeat, and lose your (favorable) wind. And be patient, verily Allah is with those who have patience.] Qur'an 8/46

What Is Courage?

Courage is not strength of the body. A man may be strong physically, but weak in heart. Rather, courage is the strength of the heart and its steadfastness. The critical factors in warfare are physical strength, skill in warfare, and the courage and steadfastness of the hearts of the fighters.

The only courage which is praiseworthy is courage based on knowledge and information, not mere wildness, with neither thought nor differentiation between praiseworthy and blameworthy actions. For this reason the strong and capable, as defined by Islam, is the one who can control himself when in anger such that he does only that which is truly beneficial. As for the one who is overcome by his anger, he is neither courageous nor capable.

A Return To Patience And Its Types

As we have said, the key to true strength is patience, it is a necessary element. Patience is of two types: patience when angry, and patience when afflicted with calamity. Al-Hassan (i.e. Al-Basry) said:

> "No slave of Allah has struck a more effective blow than wisdom and forbearance in anger and patience in the face of calamity."

This is because the common element in all of these things is patience with what is painful. The courageous and capable is the one who can be patient and persevere in spite of pain.

Something painful - if it is something which can be driven away - causes anger. And, if it is something which cannot be driven away, it causes grief (*huzn*). This is why the face becomes flushed in anger, as the blood boils due a feeling of power and capability to destroy what is causing the anger, and the face becomes pale and bloodless in grief, as the blood recedes due to the feeling of weakness and inability to do anything about the cause of grief.

Thus, the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) joined the two types of patience in the following sahih hadith found in the collection of Muslim:

> "The Prophet said: "How do you define *Ar-Raqoob* (childless) among you?" They said: "Ar-Raqoob is the one to whom no child has been born." The Prophet said: "That is not Ar-Raqoob, rather Ar-Raqoob is the one who has not offered any one of his children" (i.e. in the path of Allah). Then, the Prophet said: "And who do you consider invincible (or "the mighty") among you?" They said: "The one who men cannot overcome or defeat." The Prophet said: "It is not so, rather, the mighty is the one who can control himself in anger."

In this hadith, the Prophet mentioned that which includes patience in the face of calamity (i.e. losing of sons to fighting in the path of Allah), and patience in anger. Allah said about calamity in general:

> [And give glad tidings to the patient ones *Those who, when afflicted by any calamity, say: "Verily, from Allah we came, and unto Allah we will return.""]

And Allah said about anger:

> [Good acts and bad acts are not the same. Drive away (bad) with that which is better. Suddenly, the one with whom there was enmity becomes as a close and devoted friend * And none will achieve this except those who are patient,

> and none will achieve this except those of the greatest good fortune.] Qur'an 41/34-35

This exposition of common elements between patience in the face of calamity, and patience in anger is analogous to the citing of the common element between patience in adversity and patience in plenty and ease as in the following verse:

> [And if we give man a taste of mercy from us, and then take it away from him, verily he is despondent and ungrateful. And if we give him a taste of plenty after some adversity which had afflicted him verily, he will say: The evil has left me. Verily, he is joyous, haughty. All except those who are patient and do good works, for these are forgiveness and a great reward.] Qur'an 11/9-11

> [In order that you may not become despondent over that which did not come to you, nor (overly) joyous over that which came to you.] Qur'an 57/23

With this characteristic, the poet Ka'ab ibn Zuhair described the Migrators among the companions (May Allah be pleased with them) saying:

> "They are not overly joyous when there swords have struck their opposition, nor are they despondent when they themselves are struck."

Another poet, Hassaan ibn Thabit said in description of the *Ansar* (Helpers):

> "There is no haughtiness if they inflict wounds on their enemy, and there is no lassitude and no discontent if they themselves are wounded."

Some of the Arabs used to say about the Prophet:

> "When he is victorious he is not haughty, and when he is defeated he is not grief-stricken."

The Forbiddance Of Transgressing The Bounds

Since *shaitan* is calling people, during these two types of situations, to transgress the bounds established by Islam with their hearts, voices, and hands, the Prophet (sallallahu

`alayhi wa sallam) has interdicted that as in the following hadith: It was said to the Prophet when he was seen to shed tears when he saw his son Ibrahim prepared for burial:

> "Do you weep, though you have forbidden the weeping and wailing over the dead?" The Prophet said: "That which I have forbidden is none other than two idiotic, obscene voices: one voice in times of plenty and ease: frivolity, playing of games, and the pipes of Satan (i.e. music); and another voice in times of calamity: beating of (one's own) cheeks, and tearing of clothes, and invoking the invocations of the *jahiliyah* (i.e. cries for revenge or asking for evil to befall someone based on nationalism or tribalism).

in which the Prophet has mentioned both of them in the same hadith. In another hadith, he forbids that in relation to calamities only:

> "Whoever hits his cheeks and tears his clothes, and calls out with the invocations of the jahiliyah is not one of us."

And, in another hadith:

> "I am innocent of (the sins of) the one who shaves his head, and the one who wails, and the one who tears his clothes (i.e. the one who does these things when afflicted with calamity."

> "Verily, Allah does not hold anyone to account for the tear of an eye, nor the grief of the heart, rather, He punishes or has mercy based on this. (While saying this, he pointed to his tongue."

> "Whoever people weep and wail for is punished because of their weeping and wailing." (This hadith, and all before it in this section are from Bukhari)

One of the conditions demanded of the women in the first Oath of Allegiance was that they must agree never to weep and wail over the dead, and he said:

> "Verily, the woman who weeps over the dead, if she does not repent before her death, will be dressed on the day of Qiyama in a vest of sores, and a dress of molten tar."

The Prophet mentioned the two idiotic and obscene voices: a voice which brings about transgression in joy such that the person becomes "joyous and arrogant" (*farihun*

fakhuur), and another voice in times of grief which brings about impatience and despair, such that the person becomes "discontent and impatient" (*haluu'an jazuu'an*).

As for the voice which arouses anger **for the sake of Allah**, such as the battle cries and the poetry which is composed for *jihad*, this was never done with musical instruments. Similarly, the voices of spreading the word at wedding celebrations. These two have been permitted, and exempted from the general ruling by the Sunnah of the Prophet: cries and poems of battle, and the beating of the *daff* (a bangle-less tambourine) at wedding parties, and festivities for women and young children.

Most of the poems which are read aloud to arouse feelings in people are of these four types: i.e. love poetry and descriptions of the beloved one, poems of anger and fervor (nationalistic or other), poems of lamentation over calamities, and poems of ease, plenty, and joy, which are the poems of flattery.

The norm of the poets is that they follow human nature, as Allah said:

> [Did you not see that they are in every valley, wandering aimlessly? * And that they say that which they do not do?] Qur'an 26/225-226

For this reason, Allah informs us that the poets are followed by the *ghaawoon* (singular: *ghaawi*). The *ghaawi* is one who follows his *hawaa* without knowledge and without guidance, and this is referred to as *ghayy*. Such a person is not guided (*muhtadiy*). Just as one who is astray or "lost" (*dhaall*) is the one who does not know that which is in his own benefit, again in contrast to the one on the guidance. Allah said:

> [By the star as it sinks * Your companion is not lost (*dhaall*), nor is he misgiuded (from *ghayy*).] Qur'an 53/1-2

And, for this reason, the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said:

> "What is upon is (to follow) whatever you come to know of my tradition (*sunnah*), and the tradition of the early, rightlyguided successors, clamp down on this with your molars!"

Thus we find them (the poets) praising all types of bravery and forbearance, since the lack of these traits is blameworthy in any situation whatsoever. As for the presence of these traits, it will bring about the achievement of what the self desires whatever that may be,

but the **final** benefit is only for the pious. As for the impious, they will have benefits in the short run (i.e. this life), but not in the long run (i.e. in the hereafter).

The "final benefit", though it is ultimately in the hereafter, can also be in this life, as Allah said after mentioning the story of Nuh, and his being saved in the ark:

> [It was said: O, Nuh, come down (from the ark) with peace from us and blessings upon you and upon other peoples (which will spring) from you. And to other peoples we will grant pleasures (for a time) then touch them with a painful punishment * These are some of the stories of the unseen which we have revealed to you. Neither you nor your people knew them before this. So, have patience, verily the final benefit is for the pious.] Qur'an 11/48-49

> [And so whoever transgresses against you, transgress against them to the same degree in which they transgressed against you, and have fear (*taqwa*) of Allah, verily, Allah is with those who fear Him.] Qur'an 2/194

Fervor And Courage Which Is Praiseworthy

The criterion here is that the only fervor or courage which is praiseworthy is that which has been praised by Allah and His Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam). Allah is the one whose praise is beauty and whose censure is dishonor, and this is to no one other than Allah, neither poet, nor orator, nor anyone else. Thus, when an Arab from the tribe of Bani Tameem said to the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) "My praise is beautification, and my censure is disgrace", the Prophet said to him: "That is Allah!".

Allah has praised courage and forbearance in His path, as in the *sahih*, narrated by Abu Musa Al-Ash'ariy (may Allah be pleased with him):

> It was said to the Prophet: A man may fight out of courage, and he may fight out of fervor and excitement, and he may fight to be seen by others, so which of those are (truly) in the path of Allah? The Prophet said: Whoever fights so that the word of Allah may be uppermost is in the path of Allah."

Just as Allah said:

> [And fight them until there is no more chaos and discord, and all religion is solely for Allah] Qur'an 8/39

This, in fact, is the purpose for which Allah has created mankind, as He said:

> [And I have not created the jinn and humankind except that they may worship Me.] Qur'an 51/56

Thus any act which is in pursuit of the overall goal for which the entire creation has been created is praiseworthy in the sight of Allah; and it is that which has some remaining benefit for its doer, and Allah will benefit him because of it. These then are the righteous deeds (*Al-a'maal As-Saalihaat*) referred to in the Qur'an. In this regard, people can be divided into four categories:

(1) Those who strive and work for the sake of Allah with courage and forbearance. These are the believers who deserve the reward of paradise.

(2) Those who strive and work for other than Allah with courage and forbearance. These benefit from their efforts in this life, and there is nothing of that for them in the hereafter.

(3) Those who work for Allah, but without courage and without forbearance. These have an element of hypocrisy (*nifaaq*) and lack of faith (*imaan*) to the degree of their cowardice and discontent.

(4) Those who do not work for Allah, and who have no courage and no forbearance. These have no share neither in this world nor in the hereafter.

The Character Needed By The Believer

These traits and these works are needed by the believer in general, and especially in times of chaos, strife, and extreme trials. They are in need of thorough reforming of their selves, in spite of the presence of that within them which calls to chaos and corruption. And they also need to fulfill their obligations in terms of enjoining others what is right and forbidding them what is wrong to the extent of their ability. Both of these obligations contain great difficulties as we have seen, though are easy for those for whom Allah has made them easy.

This is because Allah has ordered the believers to have faith and do good deeds, and has ordered them to call the people and struggle with them to bring about faith and the practice of good deeds. And Allah has promised them His aid in these pursuits. Allah said:

> [And Allah will certainly aid those who aid Him (i.e. His cause), and verily Allah is strong, mighty. Those who, if we empower them in the land establish the prayer, pay the Zakat, enjoin all that is right, and forbid all that is wrong. And unto Allah is the end of all affairs.] Qur'an 22/41

> [Verily, we will support our prophets and those who believe in the life of this world, and on the day when the witnesses stand forth. (i.e. Qiyama)] Qur'an 40/51

> [Allah has decreed: I will be victorious, my self and my prophets. Verily, Allah is strong, mighty.] Qur'an 58/21

> [Verily, our forces will vanquish them.] Qur'an 37/173

Fear Of Falling Into Temptation As An Excuse For Neglecting Enjoining Right

Enjoining right and forbidding wrong, and fighting in the path of Allah (*Jihad*) contain severe tests and trials in which one is exposed to the risk of succumbing to various kinds of temptation. For this reason, a group appears among the people who cite their fear of these temptations as their excuse for avoiding that which has been made obligatory upon them claiming that they only seek safety from these temptations. Just as Allah said about the hypocrites:

> [Among them are he who says: Excuse me, and do not expose me to temptation. But, verily, they have already fallen for temptation.] Qur'an 9/49

The scholars of *tafsir* (Qura'anic interpretation) have mentioned that this verse was revealed concerning a man named Al-Jadd ibn Qais when the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) ordered him to prepare himself for the battle or Rum (The Romans). I believe the Prophet said to him: Do you have some problem with the women of the white folk? Al-Jadd said: O, Prophet, there is no man as infatuated with women as myself, and I fear that, when I see the women of the white people, I may not be able to restrain myself. The

Prophet turned his face away from Al-Jadd and said: "I have excused you." (From the *Seera* of Ibn Hisham)

This man is the same one who failed to take the Oath known as *Bai'atul Ridhwan* which the companions gave to the Prophet under a tree (shortly before the truce of Hudaibiya), and concealed himself behind a red camel. In the hadith, the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) once said:

> "All of you have been forgiven his sins, except the man of the red camel."

And so, Allah revealed the above aya about this man, saying:

> [Among them are he who says: Excuse me, and do not expose me to temptation. But, verily, they have already fallen for temptation.] Qur'an 9/49

Here, Allah is saying: This man has requested to remain behind to keep himself from the temptation of women, so that he may not be subjected to trials because of them: either he needs to fight his innate tendencies, and suffer because of this inner conflict, or he may give in to his base desires, and fall into sin. Whoever sees a very beautiful figure and desires it - if he is unable to obtain his desire - either because of the forbiddance of the law, or because of his own inability, suffers torment in his heart. If he is able to take it, even though it is forbidden, he is destroyed, and even in the halal of that i.e. interaction with women, are dangerous traps.

This is the meaning of the statement of Al-Jadd: "... and do not expose me to temptation." And so, Allah said: [Verily, they have already fallen into temptation.] i.e., saying: His very turning away from the obligation of *jihad*, and his withdrawing from it, and the weakness of his faith, and the sickness of his heart which made his trying to avoid *jihad* seem good and acceptable, is a great temptation for which he has **already** fallen. This being the case, how can he ask for relief from a minor temptation, which has not even befallen him yet, by succumbing to a greater temptation which has already occurred? Allah said:

> [And fight them until there is no more chaos, and religion is wholly for Allah.]
> Qur'an 8/21

So, whoever avoids the fighting which Allah has ordered so as not to be exposed to temptation, has already fallen to temptation, because of the doubt and sickness which

have come into his heart, and his neglecting of the *jihad* which Allah has ordered him to undertake.

Contemplate this very carefully, for it is a very dangerous question. People, in this regard, are in two categories:

1) One group enjoins and forbids and fights in order, as they imagine, to remove chaos and temptations. There actions are a greater chaos or temptation than that which they seek to remove. This is the example of those who rush to fight in the conflicts which arise among the Muslims, such as the *khawaarij*.

2) Another group leaves enjoining right and forbidding wrong and fighting in the path of Allah by which religion may become solely for Allah, and His word may be uppermost, in order that they may avoid being tempted. They have already fallen into and succumbed to temptation.

The temptation mentioned in the above verses includes the temptation of beautiful faces, since it is the story behind the revelation of the verse. In a more general sense, this is the case of many so-called "religious" people. They neglect the enjoining of right and forbidding of wrong which is obligatory upon them and the fighting in the path of Allah with which all religion can be for Allah, and by which the word of Allah becomes uppermost, in order to avoid the temptations and lusts of this world. In fact, they have already fallen for a much more dangerous temptation than the one which they imagine themselves to be fleeing from.

What was upon them was to fulfill their obligations of enjoining right and forbidding wrong **and** keeping away from the forbidden. Keeping away from the forbidden and fulfilling the obligatory are two sides of the same coin, since their selves will not allow them any choice other than doing both of them together, or neglecting both of them together. This is the case of many of those who seek leadership or property or illegal desires: whenever they fulfill what is upon them in terms of enjoining and forbidding and fighting and ruling and such things, they always commit along with that some forbidden acts. What is upon them at that point is to analyze which are the greater of the two elements. If the obligations are greater in reward than avoiding the forbidden, they should continue, and not leave the duties which they are carrying out for fear of falling to a temptation of lesser magnitude. On the other hand, if the avoiding of the forbidden involved is greater in reward, they must not forsake this reward in the hopes of a reward of lesser degree for doing the obligatory involved. There is, in this combination of good and bad acts, a mixture of good and bad

results on their account with Allah. A detailed explanation of this concept would be too lengthy.

Every Human Being Is In Need Of Enjoining And Forbidding

Every one on the face of the earth must of necessity have enjoining and forbidding. It is a must that he be ordered and forbidden. Even if he was completely alone, he would order himself and forbid -- either with what is good, or with what is evil, as Allah said about the human self:

> [And, verily the self is ever ordering (one to commit) evil.] Qur'an 12/53

Ordering is in essence requesting a particular action, and intending it, while forbidding is requesting the avoidance of a particular action, and intending it.

The Sons Of Adam Do Not Live Except In Societies

Every living thing must, of necessity, entail intentions and wants within itself with which it determines its own actions, and with which it determines the actions of others whenever that is made possible for it. Verily, man is a living thing, he moves with his will and intention, and human beings do not live except by coming together in groups and living with one another.

Whenever two or more come together, there must of necessity be between them mutual enjoining of some things, and mutual forbidding of other things. For this reason, the smallest congregation in prayer is two people, and it has been said: two people or more constitutes a "congregation" (*jama'a*), and since their coming together is strictly for prayer, that is accomplished with only two, whereby one is the leader (*imam*), and the other is the led (*ma'moom*). As the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said to Al-Malik ibn Al-Huwairith and his companion:

> "When the time of prayer comes, make the adhan and the iqama, and then let the older of you lead the prayer." (They were similar in ability to read the Qur'an.)

As for ordinary affairs (other than prayer), it is narrated in the books of hadith that the Prophet said:

> "It is not allowed for three who go on a trip to fail to appoint one of them as *amir*" (leader)

This Enjoining Must Be With That Which Allah And His Prophet Have Enjoined

Enjoining and forbidding are of necessity present with the presence of human beings. However, one may fail to enjoin the *ma'ruf* which Allah and His Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) have enjoined, and to forbid the *munkar* which Allah and His Prophet have forbidden, and **to be ordered** to do the *ma'ruf* which Allah and His Prophet have ordered, and **to be forbidden** the *munkar* which Allah and His Prophet have forbidden. Even so, there will always be some kind of enjoining and forbidding, and being enjoined and being forbid. This may be with that which is opposite to the good and the evil which Allah and His Prophet have defined, or it may be with that which contains elements of both the truth which Allah sent down, and the falsehood for which Allah has sent no authority. If this admixture is taken as a way of life (*deen*), it is a *deen* of innovation, falsehood, and going astray. And since, as we have shown, every single person is living, acting with free will, a a seeker of objectives, a "tiller of the earth", whoever's intentions and actions are not righteous and for the sake of Allah, must of necessity commit actions which are corrupt, or not for the sake of Allah - and that is falsehood and invalid. As Allah said:

> [Verily, your efforts are various.] Qur'an 92/4

Such actions, all of them, are invalid like the actions (however good) of the disbelievers:

> [Those who reject faith, and hinder from the path of Allah, Allah will send all of their works astray.] Qur'an 47/1

> [As for those who disbelieve, their works are like a mirage in an empty plain. The thirsty one believes it to be water, but when he reaches it, he finds it to be nothing, and he finds Allah there who gives him his full account, and Allah is very quick to take to account.] Qur'an 24/39

> [And we turned to all the works which they had done, and made them (as) floating dust. (The word literally means the dust which can be seen in the air in the beam of light coming in through a small opening.)] Qur'an 25/23

Who Are "Those In Authority Among You" Who Enjoin What Is Right?

Allah has ordered us in His Book to obey Him, to obey His Prophet, and to obey those in authority among the believers saying:

> [O, you who believe, obey Allah and obey His Prophet, and those in authority among you. And if you disagree in any issue, take it back to Allah and to the Prophet, if you truly believe in Allah and in the Last Day. That is best, and will have the best final result (in application)] Qur'an 4/59

"Those in authority" are: the possessors of authority, and its people. They are the ones who enjoin the people and forbid them. This is shared by both those having political and temporal power, and the people of knowledge and intellectual influence.

Thus, "those in authority" consist of two categories: the scholars and the rulers. When they are righteous, the people are righteous, and when they are corrupt, the people are corrupt. Just as Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him) said to Al-Ahmasiya when she asked:

> "How long will we (be able) to remain in this good state?" Abu Bakr said: "As long as your rulers are upright."

Of this group are the kings and the "*Shaikhs*", and the men of religion, along with anyone who is followed by someone, who is also in a position of "authority" among you.

It is upon each and every one of these to enjoin what Allah has enjoined, and forbid what Allah has forbidden. Furthermore, it is upon everyone who is required in Islam to obey his amir, or others, to obey them in (all that is) obedience to Allah, and **not** to obey them in disobedience to Allah, Abu Bakr said when he first assumed the Caliphate:

> "O, people, the strong among you is the weak as far as I am concerned until I take peoples right dues from him (and give them to their rightful owners). Obey me, as long as I obey Allah, and if I disobey Allah, I have no right to your obediance."

Pure Intention To Please Allah Is Required In All Righteous Deeds

All righteous deeds must contain the following two elements: that they be done solely for the sake of Allah, and that they be in accordance with the *shari'a*. This is for both statements and acts. It is one of the requirements of goodly speech and righteous action, in matters of knowledge and understanding, as well as matters of application, and of worship and devotion. It has thus been well authenticated in the *sahih* that the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said:

> "Verily, the first three (categories) for which hell is fired up are: A man who learned knowledge and taught it, and read the Qur'an and taught others to read it in order that the people might say: He is knowledgeable, and he is a good reciter. And a man who fought and struggled so that the people would say: He is courageous, and he is a good fighter. And a man who spent of that which he was given and gave charity so that the people would say: He is generous, and he is openhanded."

These three people desire eye service and reputation and credit. They are in opposition to the three which have been mentioned in the Qur'an after the prophets: the ever truthful and believing (*As-siddiqeen*), the martyrs in the cause of Allah (*Ash-shuhadaa'*), and the righteous doers of good (*As-saaliheen*).

One who learns the knowledge with which Allah sent His prophets and teaches it purely for the sake of Allah, is one of *As-siddiqeen*. And, whoever fights so that the word of Allah may be uppermost until he is killed is one of *Ash-shuhadaa'*, while one who gives his property in charity desiring only the Face of Allah, is one of *As-Saaliheen*.

This is why the one who neglected the obligations upon in his property, will ask to be sent back at the time of death. Ibn Abbas said:

> "Whoever was given property, but did not make Hajj, nor pay the Zakat due on that property, will ask to be sent back at death. Then he read the verse of the Qur'an which reads: [And spend of that which we have given you before death comes to one of you, and so he says: My Lord, if only you would give me respite for a short time so that I could give in charity, and be one of the doers of good.] Qur'an 63/10"

So, in these matters of knowledge and rhetoric, the enjoiner of good needs to make sure that all the information he passes on about Allah and the Last Day, and about things which were and are is completely correct. Also, he must be sure that everything which he enjoins on others and forbids them is just as it was delivered by the prophets from Allah. This is the right way which is in accordance with the Sunnah and the Shari'a, and it is the way of following the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam)

Just as acts of worship, which are taken as devotions - if they are of that which Allah has prescribed, and His Prophet has ordered us to do - are valid and correct and are in accordance with the message with which Allah sent the prophets. On the other hand, acts of "worship" which are not so (i.e. not part of what Allah and His Prophet have ordered) are falsehood, foolishness, and innovation which leads astray, even though its devotees may call it: knowledge, understandings, devotions, exercises, experiences, or stations.

He (the enjoiner of right) also needs to order only because of Allah's order, to forbid only because of Allah's forbiddance, and to inform only with that of which Allah has informed us, because this is the truth, the true faith, and guidance, as the prophets have informed us. This, just as true worship requires that the Face of Allah be the only thing intended with it. If any of this is done out of following of *hawaa*, and passion and fervor, or to make a show of ones dignity, or to seek reputation and eyeservice, this is like the situation of one who fights out of courage and passion, and in search of eyeservice of others.

From this, you can understand that into which many people of knowledge and influence and devotion in worship and well-being have fallen. So many such people speak many things which are in conflict with the Qur'an and the Sunnah, or that which contains some elements in accordance with the Qur'an and the Sunnah and other elements in conflict with them. And so many of them devote themselves in acts of "worship" with which Allah has never ordered them, and in fact, which He has forbidden, or acts of devotion which contain elements enjoined by Allah, and other elements which have been forbidden. And so many of them fight in wars which are not in accordance with the fighting which has been ordered by Allah, or which contains elements ordered by Allah, and other elements which He has forbidden.

Furthermore, within each of these three categories: ordered by Allah and His Prophet, forbidden, and a combination of elements from each type, are three possibilities of intentions on the part of the doer: a pure intention for the sake of Allah, following of one's

own *hawaa*, or a mixture of these two. This makes a total of nine categories in the area of intention and validity of action.

As for the bad actions in these matters, it is possible that their doer may be mistaken, or merely forgot, in which case they are forgiven, just as in the case of the judge who exerts himself to arrive at the correct ruling, but is mistaken: he is rewarded for his effort, and his error is forgiven. Also, wrong actions may be minor sins (*Saghaa'ir*) which are expiated by avoidance of the major sins (*kabaa'ir*), or he may be forgiven through repentance, or by good deeds which wipe out the bad, or they may have been expiated through calamities in this life, or for other reasons. Nonetheless, the *deen* (way) of Allah with which He sent the revealed books and with which He sent the prophets is what we have said earlier: seeking Allah with righteous actions (i.e. obediance to Him).

Allah Does Not Accept Other Than Islam From Anyone

This is the general concept of Islam, other than which Allah will not accept from anyone. Allah said:

> [Whosoever desires other than Islam as his way (*deen*), that will never be accepted from him, and, in the hereafter, he is among those in abject loss.] Qur'an 3/85

> [Allah bears witness that there is no deity other than Him, and the angels (also bear witness) and those having knowledge. He is complete in His justice. There is no deity but Him, the mighty, the wise. Verily the (one and only) way in the sight of Allah is Islam (submission).] Qur`an 3/18-19

The Meanings Of Islam

The concept of Islam contains two meanings. The first one is actively submitting to the order of Allah, and following, so the Muslim is not arrogant or proud. The second is absolute sincerity, as Allah said:

> [... and a man fully owned by one.] Qur'an 39/29

So, he is not divided between more than one, and this is when the slave surrenders himself fully to Allah, Lord of the worlds, as Allah said:

> [And who turns away from the tradition of Ibrahim (i.e. *tauhid*) except for one who has immersed himself in foolishness. We have chosen him (i.e. Ibrahim) in this world, and he will be, in the hereafter, among the righteous. And when his Lord said to him: Submit, he said: I have **submitted to** the Lord of the worlds! And Ibrahim counselled his sons and so did Ya'qub with it (saying): Dear sons, verily Allah has chosen for you the way (*deen*), so beware lest you die except in the state of submission.] Qur'an 2/130-132

> [Say: verily my Lord has guided me to a straight path. A way of right, the way of Ibrahim, who was of those pure in monotheism, and was not one of the associationists. Say: Verily, my prayer, my sacrifice, my life, and my death are for Allah, Lord of the worlds. He has no partner! With this I have been ordered, and I am the first of the Muslims.] Qur'an 6/161-163

The verb form derived from Islam (*aslama*) sometimes appears as an intransitive verb which acts through the preposition (*li*) "to", as in the above verses, and as in Allah's statement:

> [And turn toward your Lord, and **submit to** Him before the punishment comes to you, and you are without help.] Qur'an 39/54

> [She (i.e. Bilqis, the queen of Sheba) said: I have oppressed myself! And I now **submit** along with Sulaiman **to** Allah, Lord of the worlds.] Qur'an 27/44

> [And so do they seek other than the *deen* of Allah?! And **to** Him everything in the heavens and the earth has **submitted**, willingly and unwillingly, and to Him they will return.] Qur'an 3/83

> [Say, should we call on others besides Allah? Things that can neither benefit us nor harm us. And turn on our heels after Allah has guided us? Like the one who the shayateen (devils) have obsessed, wandering bewildered through the earth. He has friends who call him to "guidance" saying: Come to us. Say, verily guidance is the guidance of Allah, and we have been ordered to **submit to** the Lord of the worlds.] Qur'an 6/71

Other times the verb aslama (to submit) appears as a transitive verb (with "one's face" as the direct object) along with the concept of *ihsaan* (to do or make good), as in Allah's statement:

> [They said: No one will enter paradise except for a Jew or a Christian. Those are their hopes. Say: Bring your proof, if you speak the truth. No! Whoever **submits his face** to Allah, and is a **muhsin (doer of good)**, his is a reward with his Lord, and there is no fear upon them, nor shall they grieve.] Qur'an 2/111-112

> [And who is on a better way than the one who **submits his face** to Allah and is a **doer of good**, following the tradition of Ibrahim of pure *tauhid* (monotheism), and Allah took Ibrahim as a friend.] Qur'an 4/125

Allah has rejected the idea that there could be any *deen* (way or religion) which is better than this way. And it is the submission of ones face to Allah along with the doing of good (ihsaan), and He informed us that everyone who submits his face to Allah and is a doer of good has his reward with Allah, and there will no fear upon them, nor shall they grieve. He established this inclusive concept, and this general question as a rebuttal to the imaginings of those who imagined that no one will enter paradise except one giving allegiance to Judaism or Christianity.

The Meaning Of Submitting One's Face To Allah

These last two concepts: the surrendering of one's face to Allah, and the doing of good are the same two requirements for the acceptance of ones actions which were discussed earlier i.e. that the action be done in complete sincerity for the sake of Allah, and that it be **correct**, in accordance with the *sunnah* and the *shari'a*. This is because surrendering of one's face to Allah entails a will and an intention for the sake of Allah, as one poem says:

> "Seek Allah's forgiveness for sins which you cannot even count.
>
> Lord of (His) slaves, unto Him is (one's) face and (one's) action."

Four different words have been used here: **submission** of one's **face**, **making straight or correct** of one's face, and **directing** (literally: "facing") of one's face (i.e. to Allah), as in Allah's statements:

> [And make your faces straight at every place of prostration] Qur'an 7/29

> [And straighten your face to the way as a pure monotheist; the natural way on which Allah has made mankind.] Qur'an 30/30

And as Ibrahim (peace be upon him) is quoted as saying:

> [Indeed, I have directed my face to the one who originated the heavens and the earth as a pure monotheist, and I am not among the associationists.] Qur'an 6/79

The Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) used to say the same thing in the opening *du'a* (invocation) of his night prayer:

> "I direct my face to the one who originated the heavens and the earth as a pure monotheist, and I am not among the associationists."

In the *sahih* hadith, Al-Baraa' ibn 'aazib narrated:

> "The Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) taught me to say when going to bed: "O, Allah, I have surrendered myself to You, and directed my face toward you...."

The word for "face" in Arabic, *wajh*, can mean that which (who) directs itself (*Al-Mutawajjih*), and it can mean that which is directed toward or in the direction of (*Al-Mutawajjah Ilaihi*, or *Al-Mutawajjah Nahwahu*). As it is said: Which direction (*wajh*, literally: "face") do you want? i.e. which direction or side do you seek or intend to go? This is because these two concepts must go together, and are compliments. Wherever a person faces, his face also faces, and his face is a prerequisite of his "facing" something.

This is the case both in internal and in external actions, and this makes four things (i.e. that which is directed and that which directs, each one internal and external). The internal is the origin, and the external is the completion, and the symbol. Thus, when one directs his heart toward something, his external "face" follows suit.

When the slave of Allah has as his intention and his desired goal to direct himself toward Allah, this is the righteousness of his will and his intention. If, at the same time, he is a doer of good, he has achieved the two traits: that his actions are righteousness, and he

does not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone. (See Qur'an 18/110) This, again, is the meaning of the invocation of Umar, who used to say:

> "O Allah, make all of my actions righteous, and make all of them purely for your Face, and do not make therein any share for anyone else."

Definition Of Righteous Action

Righteous action is the doing of good (*ihsaan*, which is a causative construction meaning to make something good), i.e. the doing of righteous deeds, and righteous deeds are those which Allah has ordered us to do. That which Allah has ordered us to do is that which he has put in the law (*shari'a*), and that is what is in accordance with the Qur'an and the Sunnah of His Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam). Allah has informed us that whoever purifies his intentions for the sake of Allah, and practices *ihsaan* in his actions is deserving of reward and in safety from punishment.

For this reason, the imams of the *salaf* (the righteous first generations), used to combine these two concepts, as in the statement of Al-Fadheel ibn 'iyaadh in relation to the meaning of Allah's statement: [That He might test you, which of you are best in action.] Qur'an 67/2, he said:

> "The most sincere and the most correct." It was said to him: "O, father of Ali, what is the meaning of the most sincere (of actions) and the most correct?" He said: "Verily, any action, though it may be correct, which is not done with sincerity, is not accepted; if it is done with sincerity, but is not correct, it is also not accepted, unless and until it is both done with sincerity, and is correct. The sincere action is the one done purely for the sake of Allah, and the correct action is the one which is in accordance with the *sunnah*."

It has also been narrated by Ibn Shaaheen and Al-lalkaa'iy from Sa'eed ibn Jubair that he said: "No statement is accepted without action. And no statement **and** action is accepted without (pure) intention. And no statement **and** action **and** intention is accepted unless it is in accordance with the *sunnah*. This statement has also been narrated from Al-Hassan Al-Basry who used the word "is not valid" instead of "is not accepted".

In this is a rejection of the position of the sect called the *Murji'a*, who hold that mere verbal statement (i.e. the profession of faith) is sufficient. Rather, he informs us that statement and action are both necessary, since faith (*imaan*) is: profession and action. Both are necessary, as we have explained at length elsewhere. And we have explained that mere "belief" of the heart, and the pronunciation of the tongue, along with the presence of loathing for Allah and His laws, and arrogance in front of Allah and His laws, cannot be called faith (*imaan*) by the consensus of the believers - not until this "belief" is joined by righteous action. The origin of action is the action of the heart, and that is its love, and its overwhelming respect and humility which eliminates loathing and arrogance.

Then, they went on to say: Statement and action is not accepted except with correct intention. This is clear: statement and action which is not undertaken purely for the sake of Allah is not accepted by Allah.

Then, they went on to say: Statement and action and intention is not accepted except with its being in accordance with the *sunnah*, and the *sunnah* here means the *shari'a* (law). And that is what Allah and His Prophet have ordered. Statement, action, and intention which is not enjoined by the *sunnah*, enjoined by the *shari'a*, i.e. which Allah has ordered is *bid'a* (innovation), and all innovation is going astray, and is not of that which Allah loves, so Allah does not accept it, and it is not valid. Examples are the actions of the associationists, and the Christians and Jews.

The Meaning Of The "Sunnah" In The Discourses Of The Salaf

The word "sunnah" in the discourse of the salaf (the righteous first generations), is used to mean the "sunnah" (i.e. tradition or way of the Prophet) in acts of worship, and in beliefs, though many of those who wrote about the sunnah mean by that discussions of belief. An example is the statement of Ibn Masood, Ubayy ibn Ka'ab, and Aby Ad-dardaa' (May Allah be pleased with them) who said:

> "Modest efforts in something which is sunnah is preferable to exertion in something which is *bid'a*." (innovation)

And Allah is the All-Knowing.

All praise is to Allah alone. Peace and salutations of Allah be upon Muhammad, and upon the people of Muhammad, and his companions.

This is the end of the words of Shaikh Ibn Taymiyya.

It was copied from an ancient original by the impoverished for the clemency of his Lord, Mawhoob ibn Ahmad ibn Hilal As-Saalihiy Al-Hanbaliy, may Allah forgive his sins by His grace and generosity. He completed this copying at the end of the year 840 after the Hijrah in the Islamic school known as "Al-Madrasah Al-Jauzia" in Damascus.

All praise is to Allah, He is sufficient, and the best of guardians.